

# HAMLET:

## THE MANGA



BASED ON THE PLAY BY:  
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

ADAPTED AND DIRECTED BY:  
ZELGADIS GREYWERS

Ladies and Gentlemen...  
Introducing the Head of Seyruun's  
Ministry of Culture, Gracia--er-- I mean,  
Naga the White Serpent...

Oh-HO-HO-HO-  
HO-HO !!!  
Greetings, Culture  
Lovers...

I'm coming to you tonight  
from the Atlas City Palace of the  
Arts where the curtain is about to  
rise on the most anticipated event  
of this year's theatre  
season...

...A brand spanking-new interpretation of William  
Shakespeare's classic tragedy --Hamlet !  
We've a large and spirited crowd on hand to  
witness tonight's gala premiere...

Sorry lady !  
No pets either !  
You're going to  
have to do  
**SOMETHING**  
about these  
dogs of  
yours...

Nice doggie...

What do you mean,  
there's no smoking in  
this theatre ?



They're NOT  
dogs! They're  
WOLVES!

Ow! It  
bit me! H-HEY!  
Get it off me!

Hmm. Already  
looks like we're in  
for an exciting  
evening...

There appears to be  
some kind of disturbance  
surrounding a tall blonde  
in the third row...



Come on..  
THIS way,  
lady...

Grrr! Lemme go!  
My Xelly Boy's in tonight's  
play! Ooooh! We  
smokers have rights  
TOO you know...

YAAAH! Quick!  
Someone call the  
ASPCA!



Oh God!  
Help!  
HELP!

We now have a  
special treat for you, folks!  
Here to grant us a pre-opening  
night interview is the star  
and director of tonight's  
show...

Zelgadis Greywers!

Mr. Greywers,  
Would you mind sharing  
a few words with us about  
your production?

Certainly, Miss Naga.  
I would be only too glad  
to have the opportunity to  
discuss the nature of  
tonight's performance with  
you and your viewing  
audience...



What made you decide to take on "Hamlet" of all things?

Well, of all of Shakespeare's work, I've found THIS play to be closest to my heart...



Each generation has had its own interpretation of the play. What I intend to do is update the story for a more contemporary audience. I want it to appeal to--

HEY!

What is it, Lina? Can't you see I'm in the middle of an interview here?

Director Man! I want a word with you!


So tell me, Mr. Greywers, what is this "Hamlet" play all about, anyway?

Well, the play itself is about a young man who struggles to keep himself from being overwhelmed by the chaos and madness which surrounds him on a daily basis...

He's a character in a situation which I find myself EASILY able to relate to...

Grrr! I'm not going through with this! I don't like the way this costume looks on me! Why do I have to be a GUY anyway?





We've discussed this before. There just aren't enough female roles in this play to go around...

Crossdressing actors were common in Shakespeare's time, so you've nothing to be embarrassed about.. Besides, Horatio is a VERY important role...

I know... But do you really think the audience will be able to believe that a beautiful young sorceress such as myself is actually a MAN?

Oh, I don't think believing it will be TOO big of a stretch for them...

Just whaddaya mean by THAT ?!!

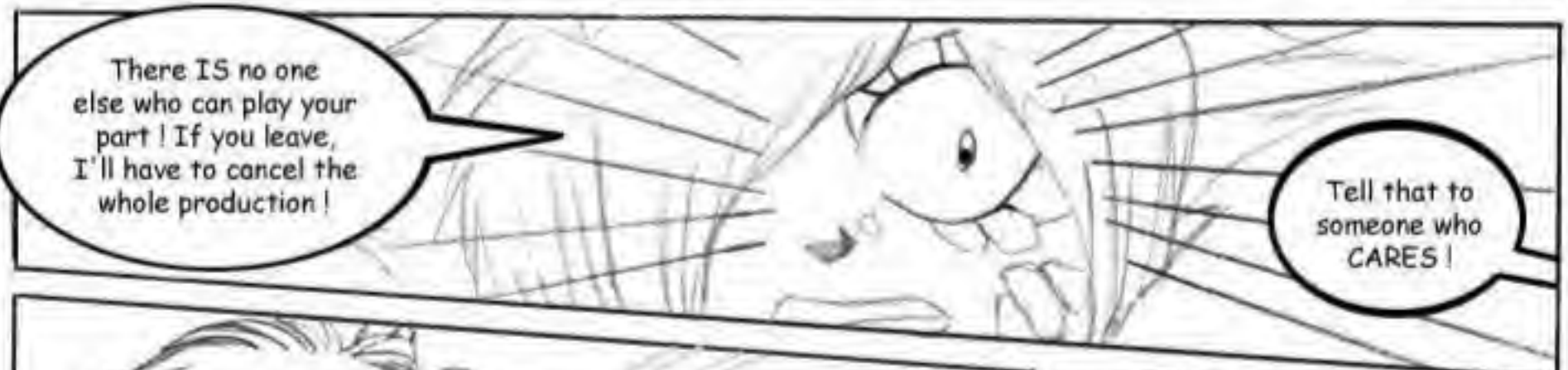
Er... J-Just that, you're such a GOOD actress, convincing the audience that you're a man should be easy for you...

...And the fact that you have practically NO BREASTS should make it even EASIER...

W  
H  
O  
M  
P!!







For the opening night  
cast party I planned  
on throwing after tonight's  
performance...

I was going to set  
up a whole buffet  
backstage... I ordered  
fried chicken...  
...a shrimp platter...

...spaghetti and  
meatballs....

...steak and eggs...  
...pasta...

...a full dessert  
tray...

...oh, and YOUR  
favorite, of course--  
cocktail weenies  
with wasabi  
sauce...

It's time to  
get this show on  
the road!

To your places!

\*Sigh.\*  
But since the  
play is going to be  
cancelled, there's  
really no point in  
going ahead with  
this, now is  
there, Lina?

Allright everybody!  
Listen up!

Lina?

Lights!  
Make up!  
Wardrobe!

Curtain rises  
in ten  
seconds!

PROPS







What IS it, Xellos?

Nothing, Filia... I'm just here to tell you to "Break a Leg"....



Oooh! A Mazoku scumbag like yourself WOULD say something mean like that to a girl about to give her first performance!

Oh....

I wasn't TRYING to be mean, Filia....

"Break a Leg" is just old theater lingo. It's something actors say to each other when they want to wish each other luck...



Xellos? You're wishing ME luck? Why that's... so....THOUGHTFUL of you...



Well, after seeing the way YOU act, I figured, if there's ANYONE who'll need to have extra luck with them when they go out on stage tonight, it's YOU...

TWITCH  
TWITCH





**DIE!**



**WAM!**



Xelloss!  
You heartless  
NAMAGOMI!



You'd better  
stay out of my way  
tonight if you know  
what's good for you!

Unhhh.



Y'know... \*coff\*...  
Around certain people,  
there are times when being  
a masochist REALLY comes  
in handy...



Allright !  
Listen up,  
people !



Mmpff !!

The play officially  
begins in thirty seconds !  
Everyone ! Take your  
positions !



Hurry and get in  
your costumes if you  
haven't already !

Get ready  
to dim the  
houselights...



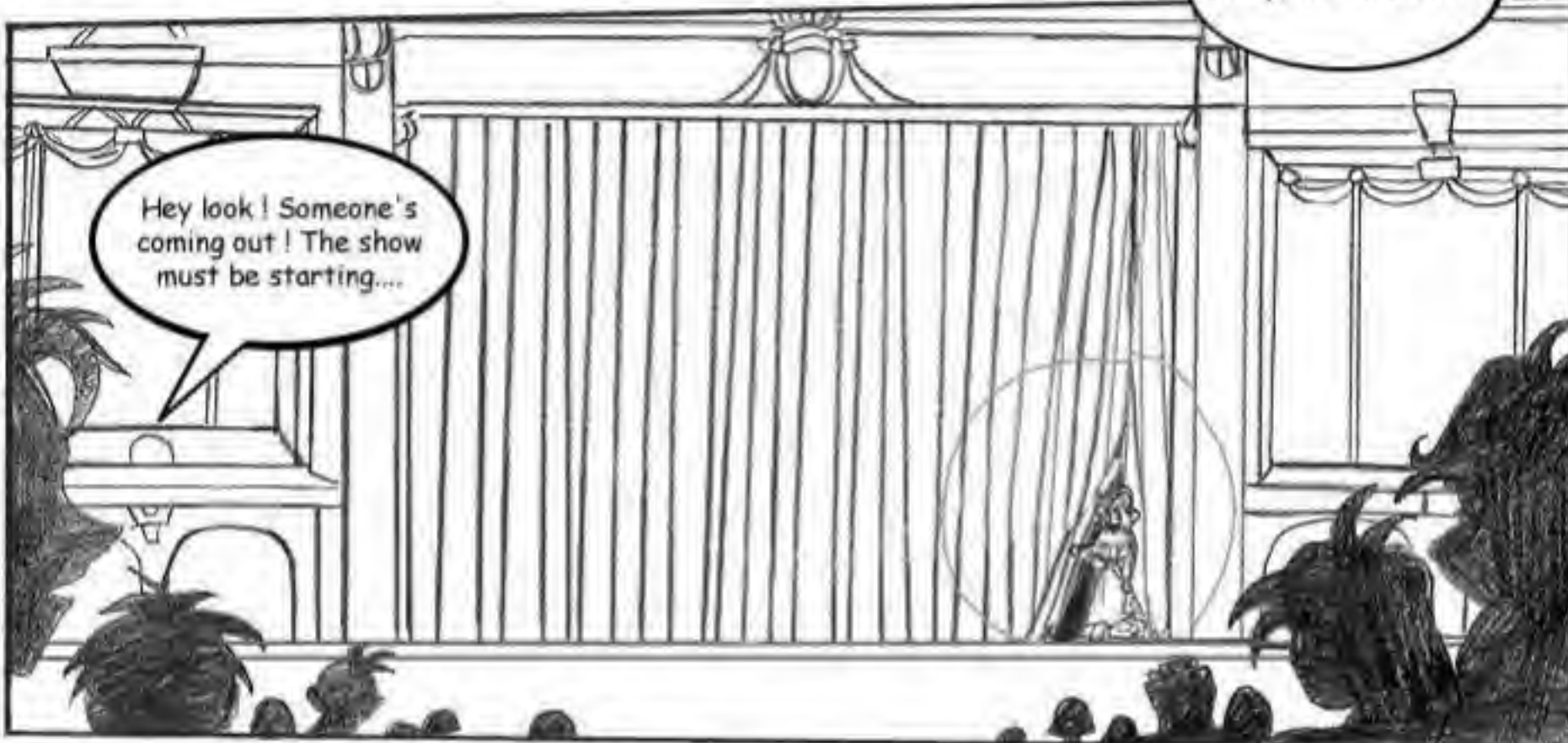
...AND raise  
the curtain !


Make sure  
everything's where  
it's supposed to be,  
including  
yourselves !






Okay, Mr. Director!

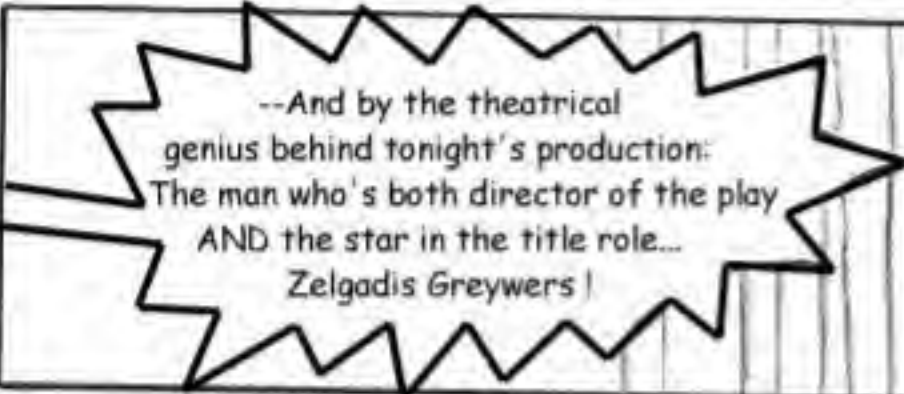





...I bid you  
welcome to  
tonight's  
performance of  
William  
Shakespeare's  
time-honored  
tragedy—




"HAMLET" !  
Brought to you thanks to  
a generous grant from the  
Seyruun Royal Ministry  
of Culture...




--And by the theatrical  
genius behind tonight's production:  
The man who's both director of the play  
AND the star in the title role...  
Zelgadis Greywers !



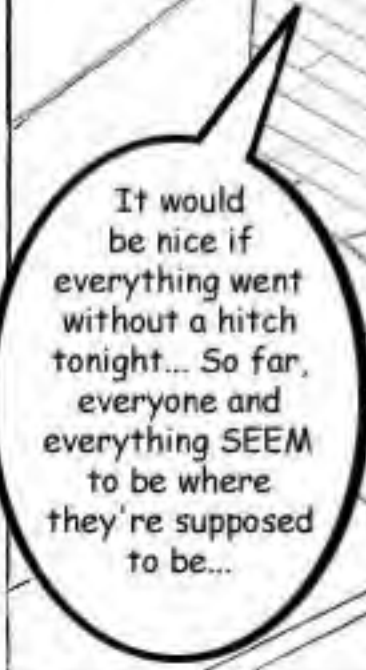
FINALLY !  
This play is getting  
off the ground...




Wait a minute...  
It's been a while since  
I've seen Xellos... I wonder  
if HE's where he's supposed  
to be... It'd be just like him  
to try and create a major  
headache for me...



Hi,  
Director  
Man ! Is it  
time for the  
play to  
start  
already ?



It would  
be nice if  
everything went  
without a hitch  
tonight... So far,  
everyone and  
everything SEEM  
to be where  
they're supposed  
to be...



\*Sigh\*  
Why me ?

KLONK!

Coming up next...  
**Act One**



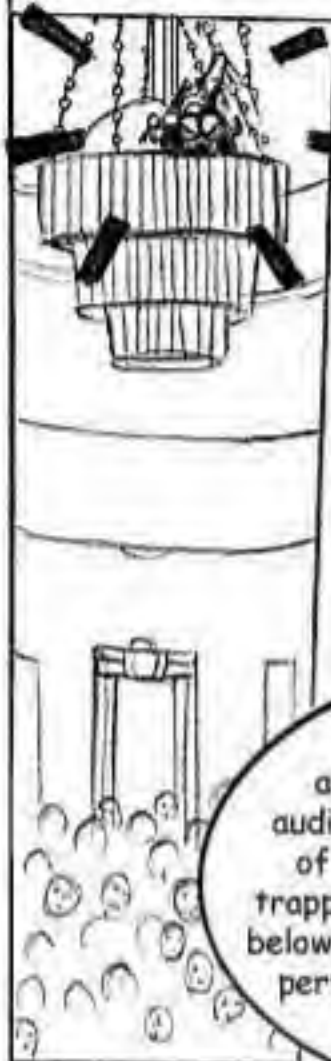
# Hamlet: The Manga

## Act One

### Scene One



Hello, theatre lovers!  
It's me again! Naga,  
the White Serpent!



Coming to you from  
a chandelier high above the  
audience at the Atlas City Palace  
of the Arts where I'm STILL  
trapped... \*Sigh\*... On the stage far  
below me, you can see that tonight's  
performance is just about ready  
to begin...

Filia, the narrator, has  
just stepped out on stage  
and is starting to deliver  
the opening monologue...



CLANK!  
RATTLE!

Rest assured that  
I, Naga, will be on hand  
to provide you with a stageside,  
play-by-play commentary of  
tonight's performance...  
Just as soon as I'm free of  
these chains... Urreeghh...  
..Ennhhhh...

Tonight's story  
takes place centuries ago...  
In a faraway kingdom  
named Denmark...



...in a period of history when darkness and chaos ruled the land..

Grrr... Xelloss!  
You said if I let you in on this play, you wouldn't cause me any trouble!

I wasn't trying to cause you any trouble...  
Just trying to wish Miss Filia a little luck with her performance tonight...

Just leave her alone! I don't want there to be any fighting between you two tonight!

Uh-oh!  
I forgot! Filia's opening speech! This is the part where the curtain goes up!

...It was a time of unrest and upheaval, when thrones were often passed from one hand to another through violent and bloody conflict...

We gotta get off the stage...  
We'll continue this discussion LATER, Xelloss!

Urk!!

RUSTLE

Our story begins in Castle Elsinore, the ancestral home of the Danish royal family, whose stark stone walls have borne silent witness to many momentous and tragic events...  
But nothing like what is about to unfold tonight in our story...



Scene One opens on a guard's platform on an outer wall of Castle Elsinore during the dead of night... The fog and shadows now lie thick upon the stones... So thick that those whose duty it is to guard them can barely see each other...



..For tonight, a strange and unearthly power is about to descend upon this castle and it's unsuspecting inhabitants...



Who's there ?

Nay ! Answer me !  
Stand and unfold  
yourself !

Long live  
the King !



Barnardo the soldier.  
Played by Gourry Gabriev.



Francisco the Soldier.  
Played by Sylphiel Nels Rada

Barnardo !

You come most  
carefully upon  
your hour...

'Tis now struck  
twelve. Get thee to bed,  
Francisco.



For this relief  
much thanks. 'Tis  
bitter cold, And I  
am sick at heart.

Sheesh,  
Sylphiel.. It IS  
g-g-getting cold  
around here...



A-CHOO !

FREEZE ARROW !



BACKSTAGE...

Hey, Vrumugen...  
Ease up on the ice  
spells. okay?

What  
we WANT  
to do is create  
the impression  
that the play is  
set in a cold  
place...

What we DON'T  
want to do is give the  
actors frostbite...

...FREEZE ARROW!

H-Have you  
had quiet g-guard?

N-Not  
a m-m-mouse  
s-s-stirring...

That's it! That's  
the cue for Horatio  
to start heading out  
onto the stage...

Lina! What  
are you still doing  
here? Get moving  
or you'll miss your  
entrance!

Alright, Sir  
Lawrence Olivier!  
I'm on my way al-  
ready! Sheesh!

Buffet or no,  
if Stone Boy talks to  
me like that ONE more  
time, I'm gonna turn him  
into a speed  
bump...

Let's see...  
the next actor to  
make his entrance  
is the ghost...

Speaking of which...  
Where IS the ghost?  
Rezo! REZO! Where  
ARE YOU?!



CRASSH!!

What was that?

Here's a word of advice, Zeldadis, for the next time you design a costume for me... Long flowing robes and heavy armor do NOT mix...

Reza! What ARE you doing? This is no time to be clowning around!

I'm not clowning around. I'm attempting to master the art of WALKING in this ridiculous getup!

It isn't easy with this tin can on my head...

It's weight is continually throwing me off balance, and it's interfering with my innate ability to sense where I'm going!

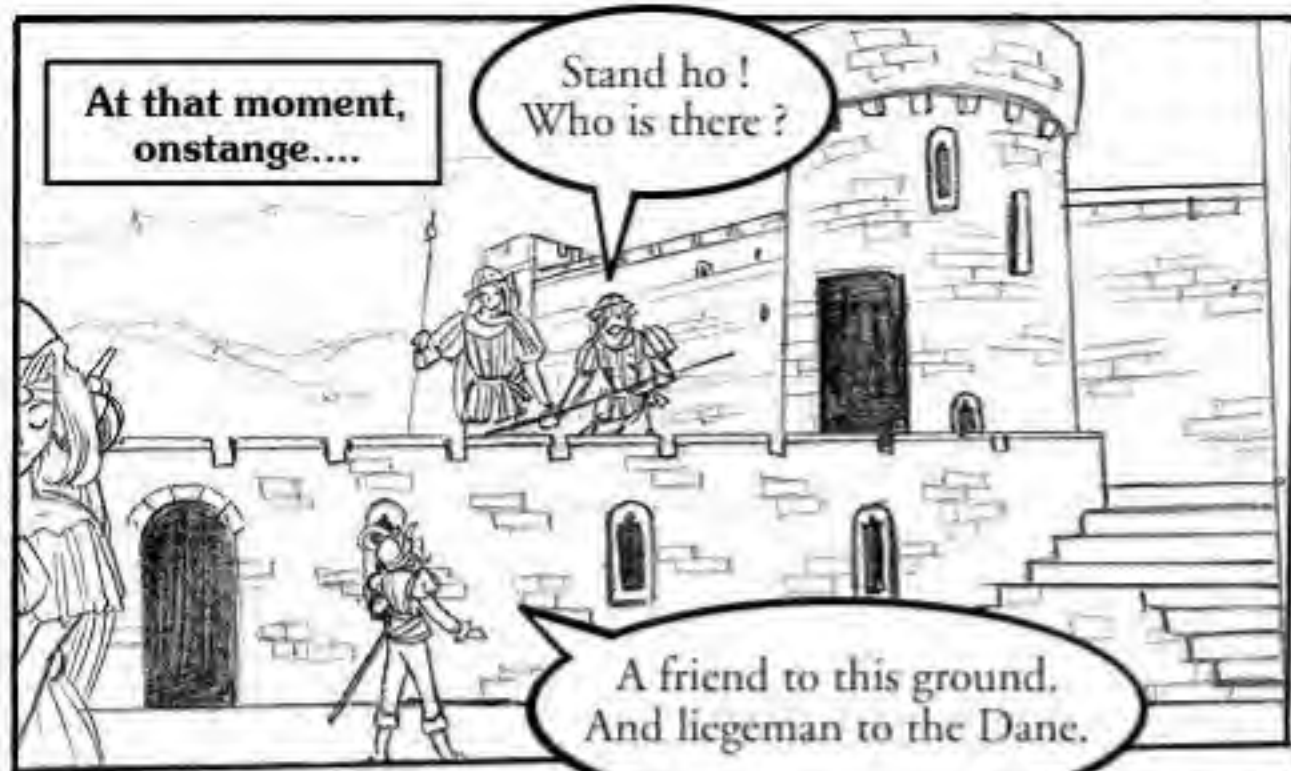
Look! I'm sorry about that! Can you please hurry and get to the stage now?

\*Sigh\* Fine....

But worst of all, it is completely RUINING MY HAIRSTYLE!!

...But if my split ends get as bad as yours, you'll regret making me wear this thing!

CLAP!



At that moment,  
onstange....

Stand ho!  
Who is there?

A friend to this ground.  
And liegeman to the Dane.



Say, what, is  
Horatio there?



A piece of  
him...

At this point in  
the story, our two vigilant  
watchmen are surprised  
by the sudden arrival of  
a handsome visitor...

It is Horatio,  
a dashing young nobleman  
who's long been a loyal friend to  
the Danish Royal Family (and whose  
role is being played tonight  
by the equally dashing  
Lina Inverse!)

\*Sigh\*  
WHY do I  
have to be a  
GUY?



I wanted to  
be a PRINCESS,  
dammit....


What, has this  
thing appeared again  
tonight?

Welcome,  
Horatio...


I have seen  
nothing....

Horatio says  
'tis but our  
fantasy, and will  
not let belief take  
hold of him...







Touching this  
dreaded sight twice  
seen of us....




Therefore I have  
entreated him along with  
us to watch the minutes of  
this night, that, if again this  
apparition come, he may  
approve our eyes and  
speak to it....




Tush,  
tush, twill  
not appear..




Sit down  
awhile...




And let us once  
again assail your ears, that  
are so fortified against  
our story, what we have  
two nights seen.




Well, sit we  
down, and let us hear  
Barnardo speak of  
this....



Well,  
Barnardo? We've  
been sitting here  
for three minutes  
now....



Isn't there  
SOMETHING  
you wanted to  
tell me?



...About a  
certain GHOST you've  
seen prowling around  
this area lately?

Hmmm...  
A ghost?

Don't you remember,  
Gourry dear? You're  
supposed to talk about  
the ghost now...

You say:

Last night of all,  
when yond same star  
that's westward from  
the pole....

Uhhh....

Last night, a ball,  
when Lon's same star  
was...uh...resting  
on a pole....

I knew it wouldn't  
be long before Jellyfish  
Brains started forgetting  
his lines....

CLINK!  
CLINK!  
CLINK!

CLINK!  
CLINK!  
CLINK!


Look!  
Here it comes  
again!

CLINK!  
CLINK!  
CLINK!

GASP!

A  
GHOST!





Horatio and the castle watchmen now find themselves coming fact to face with a chilling sight...

A ghost, clad from head to foot in full plate armor begins to ominously advance upon them; it's unearthly form ablaze with an angry, spectral fire...

Wait a minute.. If that's really a ghost, how could it be walking around in heavy armor like that?

Thou art a scholar. Speak to it, Horatio!

«Idiot! That's not really a ghost! It's... never mind...»

Look! A ghost! And in the same figure like the king that's dead...

Oh.. I remember now... That's Rezo in disguise....

SHHHH!  
It's time for my big speech now...

What art thou that  
usurp'st this time of  
night, together with that  
fair and warlike form  
in which the majesty of  
buried Denmark did  
sometimes march?  
By heaven, I charge  
thee, speak !



It is offended.

«What do I  
say now ? Oh yeah...»  
See, it stalks away !



Stay !  
Speak !  
Speak ! I  
charge thee,  
speak !

CLATTER  
CRASH

THUNK

CLANG !

YAAAAHHH !!  
##\$\*##@\$  
Son of a b--



CLATTER

CRASH!!!

##\$\*@  
Dammit ! GRKK!!  
&\*\$(~#  
OW !!!

KA-THUNK




Oh my...  
I don't remember  
reading any of THOSE  
words in the script...

Ow.... Why didn't  
I just levitate down  
those stairs instead of  
trying to walk down  
them ?




\*Coff\* This is  
the LAST time I agree  
to do anything for that idiot  
grandson/great-grandson  
of mine...






But soft, behold !  
Lo, where it comes again !




I'll cross it  
though it blast  
me...


Stay, illusion !




If thou hast  
any sound or use  
of voice, speak  
to me !



Horatio  
now rushes down  
to confront the  
ghost, to learn,  
if he can, the  
true reason  
behind it's  
unsettling  
appearance.



\*Sigh\*  
I'll never  
understand how  
Amelia can fall down  
and land on HER  
head all the time  
without feeling  
any ill  
effects...



If there be  
any good  
thing to be  
done that may  
to thee do ease  
and grace to  
me, speak to  
me !



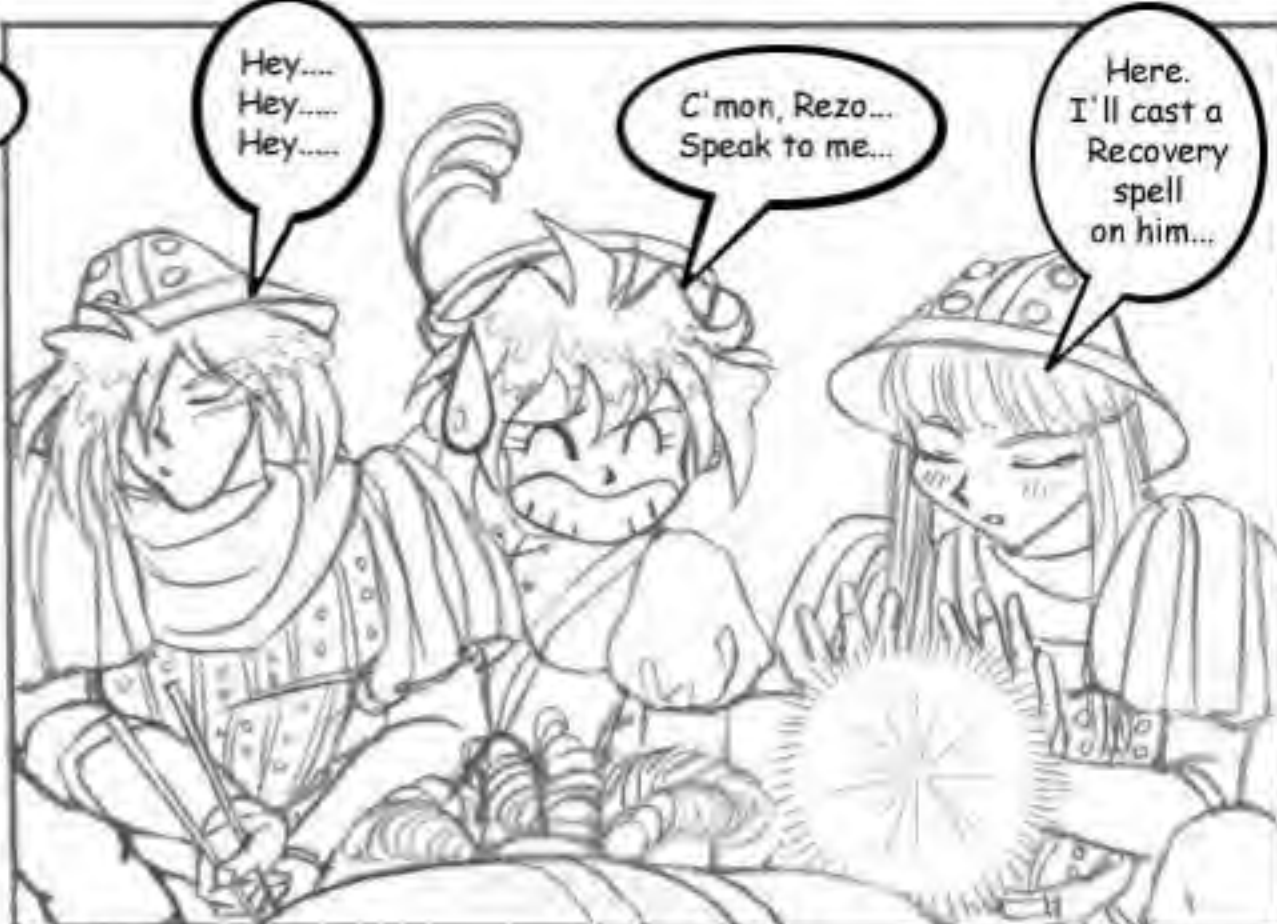
\*Groan\*

THUNK!



Uh-oh....

Unnnhhh...



Hey....  
Hey....  
Hey....

C'mon, Rezo...  
Speak to me...

Here.  
I'll cast a  
Recovery  
spell  
on him...



Damn.  
Everyone's watching us..  
Gotta do SOMETHING...

Ahhh... So... As  
you can see, our noble  
heroes' attempts to make  
contact with the ghost  
have failed....



Look! The morn  
in russet mantle clad  
walks o'er the dew of  
yon high eastward hill.  
Break we our watch up,  
and by my advice...

Let us impart  
what we have seen  
tonight unto young  
Hamlet; for, upon  
my life, this spirit,  
dumb to us, will  
speak to him.



Allright,  
Barnardo. You grab  
his legs, Francisco and  
I will take his arms...  
It's time to exit--  
stage right....





Uh, Miss Lina... I think what we're heading for is actually stage LEFT...

Whatever Just keep moving.

And so, our scene now ends, with Horatio running off to tell his best friend, Prince Hamlet, about all he has just seen...



What will young Hamlet's reaction be upon hearing the news that his father's ghost has been seen roaming the castle? Stay tuned...

Unh... Almost free...

RATTLE !



Well folks, it looks as if our play is off to an exciting start! It also looks as if Rezo will be needing an aspirin and a good stiff shot of whisky once he gets backstage...

Sure wish I could join him back there...

Uh, Zel... Where you want us to put him?

\*Sigh\* Why did I KNOW something like this was going to happen? Why can't things ever go smoothly for me?

Hey! Zel! Wake up! Armor Man here weighs a ton! Where do we put him?

In the Green Room...



...Just lay him on the couch and slip him out of his armor... We'll have to have Kopii take over the role from here...

\*Sigh\*



Alright, Vrumugen. Let's get the set turned around for Scene Two...



The curtain rises again in less than one minute...



Oh, Zangie darling... Isn't this exciting?



Our big debut as Shakespearean actors! Oh... This is SO romantic!

Martina... As always, you make a lovely Queen...



And you've never looked so regal. Oh! My heart...

It's beating so fast! Is this stage fright, or could it be LOVE?

Martina....



Hey, you two! Quit fooling around with each other and get to the stage!



Scene Two is about to start. This is NO TIME for romance!



Uh... Mr. Zelgadis?





This is a role I'm sure I was born to play... A young heroine, pure of spirit, struggling against a cruel and unjust world...



THERE you are, Amelia!

Daddy! I was just showing my costume to Mr. Zeligadis.. He says it's okay.



Splendid! Tonight, as you know, we will be stepping out on stage as father and daughter, both as actors and as the roles we both play...

This is a drama about a young man's quest for JUSTICE! You and I must work together to inspire the audience, to make this a performance to remember!



Yes! So the message of this play will remain burning within their souls long after the final curtain has fallen! I know if we try with all of our might, we cannot fail!

The name of "Shakespeare" may fade from human memory, but our passionate acting will be remembered for ages to come!



Oh...  
\*sniff\*  
Daddy...



Amelia...

AMELIAAAAAA...

DADDYYYYY...



Neither am I... Justice Speech...  
...Overload...

Unh... I'm not feeling too good all of a sudden...



Allright...  
Let's get  
ready for  
the next  
scene....

# Hamlet:

## Act One

### Scene Two

For the  
next scene, we  
take you to the  
King's Audience  
Chamber, deep within  
the sumptuous and  
richly furnished  
halls of Castle  
Elsinore...

These halls are largely quiet now,  
but two months earlier, they were  
filled with the sound of grief and  
mourning for Old King Hamlet, the  
well-loved monarch of this realm,  
who had suddenly passed away...

He was found lying all alone out  
in his garden, where he liked  
to while away the summer hours  
in sleep. Only now he wasn't  
sleeping. He was dead, a victim  
of an apparent snakebite wound.

The king  
left behind him a son,  
a young man who also went  
by the name of Hamlet.  
However, the throne passed  
not to him, but to the  
boy's uncle...

The king's  
brother, a crafty  
man named  
Claudius...



Claudius had assumed power, with the intention of transferring his kingship to the young Prince Hamlet as soon as the boy had matured enough to handle the duties and responsibilities befitting a monarch.

All now seemed well within the kingdom, but there were those who were suspicious of Claudius and his intentions. However, nothing could be said, as Queen Gertrude, the wife of the late king, had thrown her support behind him.

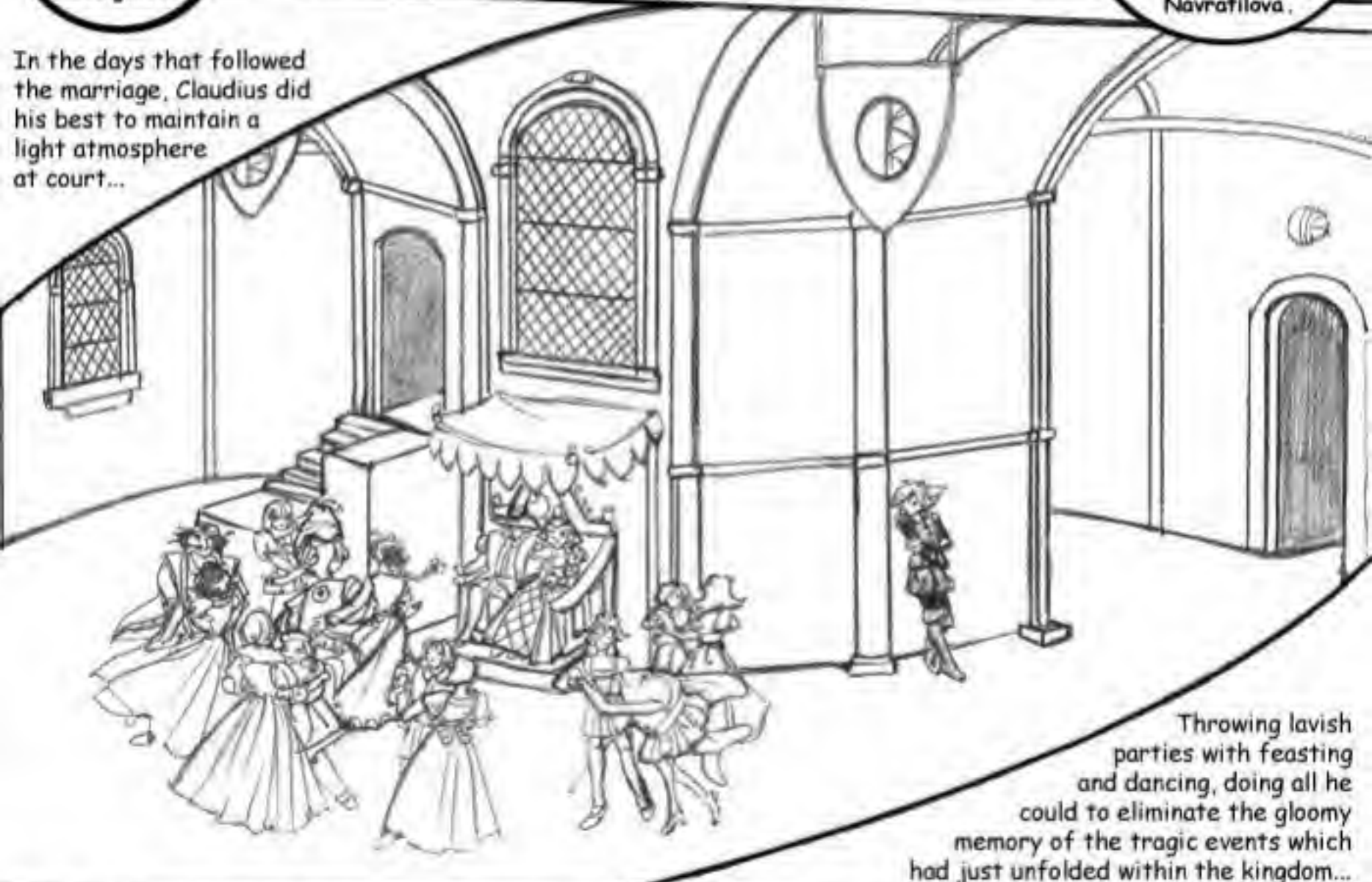


King Claudius, played by world-famous former bounty hunter, Zangulus.

Then one day, in a move that shocked everyone at court, the two of them decided to marry, not more than a month after the late king had been laid to rest...

Queen Gertrude played by Her Royal Highness, Princess Martina Xoana Mel Navratilova.

In the days that followed the marriage, Claudius did his best to maintain a light atmosphere at court...



Throwing lavish parties with feasting and dancing, doing all he could to eliminate the gloomy memory of the tragic events which had just unfolded within the kingdom...

But, on this festive evening, Claudius will find that, for some people in his court, the past is not so readily forgotten...



«Heh. Nice dance partner you got there, Sherra.»

«Shut up.»



The music suddenly stops,  
and King Claudius rises to  
address the court...

Though yet  
of Hamlet, our  
dear brother's death,  
the memory  
be green...

...And that it  
us befitted to bear  
our hearts in grief  
and our whole  
kingdom to be  
contracted in one  
brow of woe...

Yet so far hath  
discretion fought with  
nature that we with wisest  
sorrow think on him  
together with remem-  
brances of ourselves.

Therefore our  
sometime sister, now  
our queen,

Th' imperial jointress  
to this warlike state...

Have we, as  
'twere with a  
defeated joy...

...with an auspicious and  
a dropping eye, with mirth in  
funeral and dirge in marriage,

\*Giggle\*

KISS...

In equal scale  
weighing delight  
and dole ... Taken  
to wife.

Ohhh... \*KISS\*  
**SMACK**

At this point in the story, two figures now step forward to address the king... The king's chief councillor, Polonius, and with him, his son, Laertes...

Uh...  
Your Majesty?

« PSST ! Hey !  
Zangulus ! Honeymoon's  
over already ! »

Laertes, what's  
the news with you?  
You told us of  
some suit...

What is it, Laertes?

What wouldst  
thou beg, Laertes,  
that shall not be  
my offer, not thy  
asking?

My dread  
lord, your leave  
and favor to return  
to France...

...From whence  
though willingly I came  
to Denmark to show my  
duty in your coronation,

Yet now I  
must confess, that  
duty done,

My thoughts  
and wishes bend  
again toward  
France.





Have you  
your father's leave?  
What says  
Polonius?



Hath, my lord, wrung from  
me my slow leave by laborsome  
petition, and at last upon his will  
I sealed my hard consent. I do  
beseech you give him leave to go.

Please  
PLEASE let me  
go...



Take thy fair  
hour Laertes. Time  
be thine, and thy best  
graces spend it at  
thy will.



But now, my  
cousin Hamlet and  
my son--



All eyes in the court now turn towards  
a grim figure standing in their midst.  
The young Prince Hamlet, who alone  
amongst the members of the court is still  
wearing black mourning clothes in remem-  
brance of the late king. As the present  
king calls out his name, the shoulders of  
the young man can be seen to stiffen...




How is it  
that the clouds  
still hang on  
you?



Good  
Hamlet, cast  
thy nighted color  
off, and let thine  
eye look like a  
friend on  
Denmark.

Not so my  
lord; I am too  
much in the  
sun...


A little more  
than kin, and less  
than kind...



Do not forever  
with thy vailed lids  
seek for thy noble  
father in the dust.


Thou know'st  
'tis common; all that  
lives must die, passing  
through nature  
to eternity.

Ay, madam,  
it is common.



All living  
things **MUST**  
pass to eternity...  
I only wish the  
same could be said  
for that awful hat  
Zangulus is wearing.  
Doesn't he ever  
take the damn  
thing off?


'Tis sweet and  
commendable in your  
nature, Hamlet, to give  
these mourning duties  
to your father.



For your intent  
in going back to school  
in Wittenberg, it is most  
retrograde to our desire.

But to persever in  
obstinate condolment  
is a course of impious  
stubbornness

You are the  
most immediate to our  
throne, and with no less  
nobility of love than that  
which dearest father bears  
his son do I impart  
toward you.



Let not thy  
mother lose her prayers,  
Hamlet. I pray thee, stay  
with us. Go not to  
Wittenberg.





Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply. Be as ourself in Denmark.

I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

Madam, come...



So King Claudius and his loving queen take their leave, with the contented members of their court following close behind.

Their departure is heralded by a flourish of trumpets.

BLATT!

The Great Hall returns to it's usual, quiet state, and the young Prince Hamlet is left to stand alone amidst it's soul-less shadows...



...His mind weighed heavy with thoughts of despair, and soon the words he dared not say earlier come to his lips...



O, that this too, too sullied flesh would melt, that, and resolve itself into a dew...


Or that the Everlasting had not fixed his canon 'gainst self-slaughter !




Oh God, God, how weary, stale, flat and unprofitable seem to me all the uses of this world !

'Tis an unweeded garden that grows to seed. Things rank and gross in nature possess it merely.

That it should come to this: But two months dead-- nay, not so much, not two...




So excellent a king, that was to this, Hyperion to a satyr;




Must I remember? Why she would hang on him, as if increase of appetite had grown by what it fed on.

«I can see now why I chose MARTINA to play the role of this character...»




So loving to my mother, that he might not beteem the winds of heaven visit her face too roughly.


And yet, within a month... (Let me not think on 't; frailty, thy name is woman !)



It is not, nor it cannot come to good. But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue...




Hail to your lordship !



Prince Hamlet turns to find himself looking at an unexpected visitor--His best friend and college buddy, Horatio. The two men rush forward to greet each other....


I am very glad to see you. But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg, Horatio ?

Horatio !

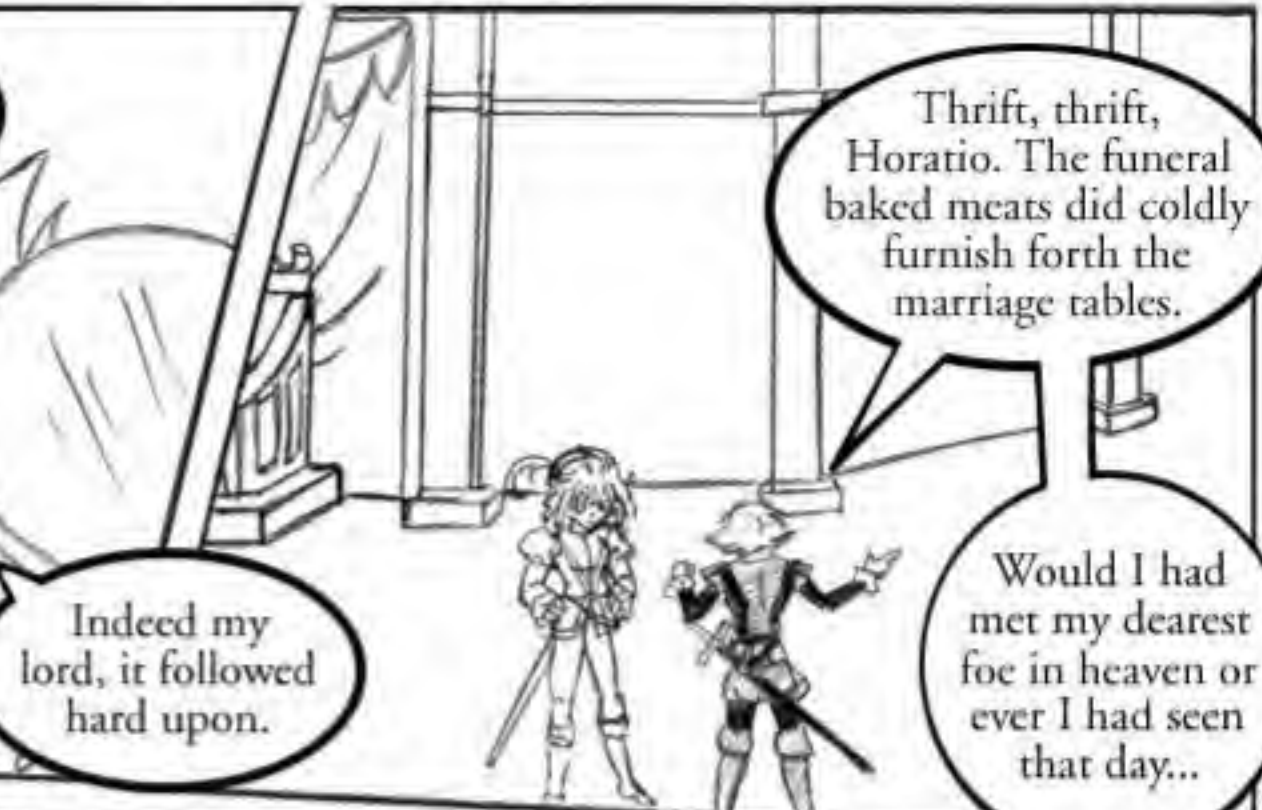


My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.






I prithee do not mock me, fellow student. I think it was to see my mother's wedding.



Indeed my lord, it followed hard upon.

Thrift, thrift, Horatio. The funeral baked meats did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.


Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven or ever I had seen that day...



Methinks I see my father...


Where, my lord?

In my mind's eye, Horatio...



I saw him once. He was a goodly king.


He was a man. Take him for all in all. I shall not look upon his like again.



My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

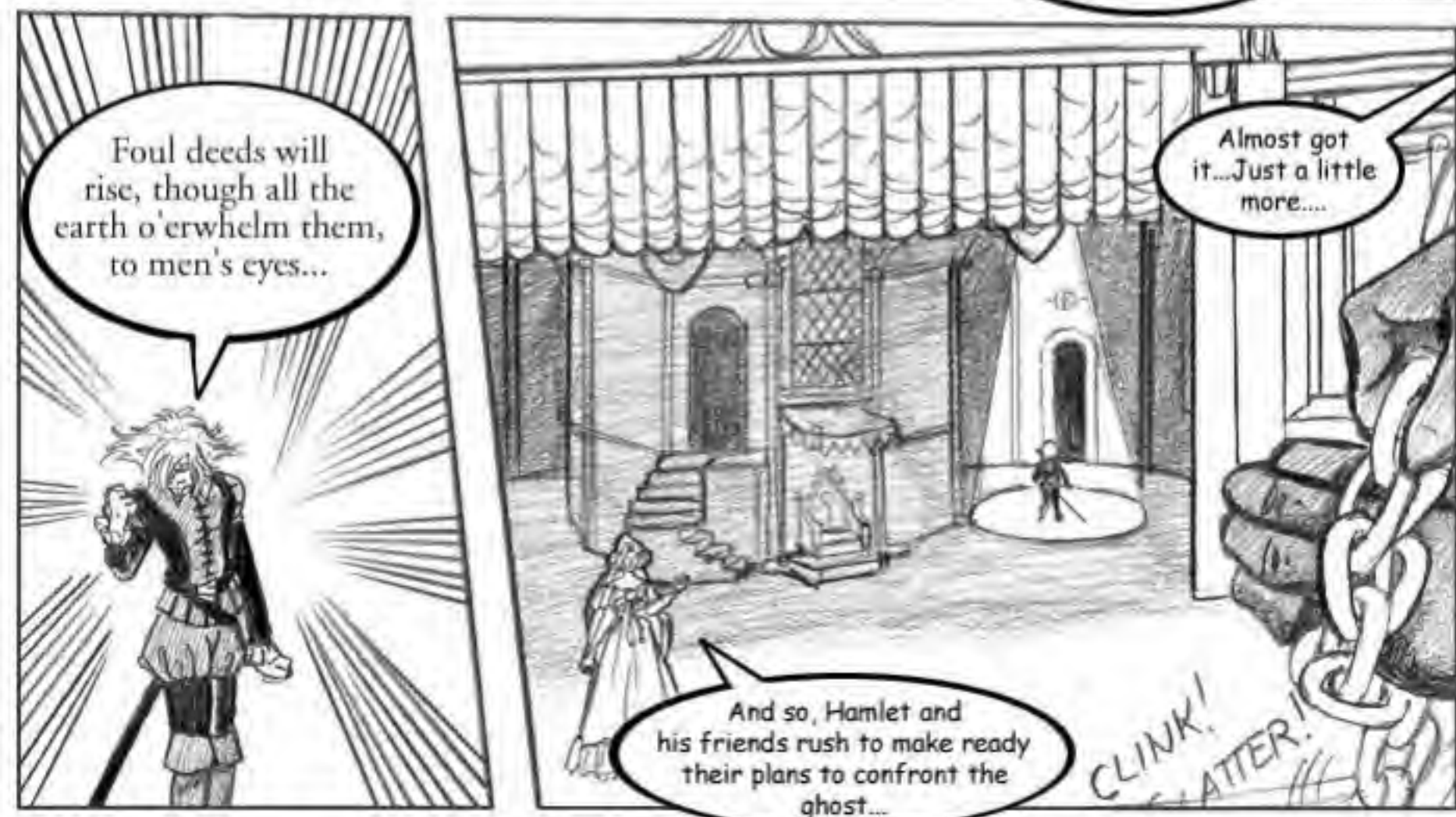
Saw who?

My lord, the king your father.



The king my FATHER?

Horatio begins to speak of the mysterious visitation he and the guardsmen had witnessed the night before. His detailed description of the ghost sends chills down Hamlet's spine, as the young prince is quick to realize that this sorrowful specter can be none other than his own recently departed and much loved father...







THERE!  
I'm free!  
FREE!



Where  
we'll see the  
big acting  
debut of my sis---  
—errr, of Princess  
Amelia of Seyruun  
as Hamlet's girl-  
friend, the tragic  
Lady Ophelia...

And as soon  
as the scene is  
over, I'll go behind  
the stage for an  
exclusive interview  
with the princess and  
her fellow cast-  
members on how they  
fee--

EEEEEE



I'd better  
quick cast a  
spell to--

Hey...  
What's this?  
Someone's duct-  
taped something  
here to the  
inside of the  
chandelier...





Well lookie here! It's a bottle of Jack Daniels! It appears as if SOMEONE on the theatre maintenance staff has a drinking problem...



Such behavior! For SHAME! I shall have to dispose of this bottle in a proper fashion once this play is over...



C'mon, Naga! What are you waiting for? Have a little drink...

Come on, one little nip won't hurt. And after all you've just been through, you deserve it!

Don't do it, Naga! You KNOW what will happen if you take even the slightest sip of that unholy stuff...

No! You CAN'T! You need to be sober and alert to perform the sacred duties entrusted to you as the Head of Seyruun's Ministry of Culture!



Aw, give it up already! We BOTH know that I'M the one she's going to be listening to in the end...

You think I have such little influence over this woman?



Well, I'm not gonna roll over and let you win THIS time! This time I'm gonna throw everything I have at you!

It'll be a knock-down, drag-out battle between the forces of good and evil which I don't intend to lose! I don't care if it takes all NIGHT!

**2-1/2  
Seconds  
Later...**







Ladies and Gentlemen. Our next scene begins with Laertes, the son of Polonius, the king's councillor, busily preparing for his trip to France...

Helping Laertes is his younger sister, the Lady Ophelia, who is rumored to be the girlfriend of the young Prince Hamlet.



We are privileged tonight to have, playing the part of the Lady Ophelia, Seyruun's very own Princess Amelia!



And... We regret to inform you...



...That tonight, the part of Laertes will be played by that no-talent, mazoku hack, Xellos Metallium...



BOOOO !!! BOOOOO!!!!

GO HOME!

HIS-S-S-S-S-S-

EVIL GLANCE

GASP!

\*SHUDDER\*

YIPE!

Err..uhh... S-Scene Three begins in the part of the castle where Polonius and his family have their private chambers...

THIS SECTION RESERVED FOR: GOLDEN DRAGON

THIS SECTION RESERVED FOR: GOLDEN DRAGON



# Scene Three...

My necessities are embarked. Farewell. And sister, as the winds give benefit and convey is assistant, do not sleep, but let me hear from you...

Do you doubt that?

For Hamlet, and the trifling of his favor,

Hold it a fashion and a toy in blood,

A violet in the youth of primy nature, Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting, the perfume and suppliance of a minute,

No more.

No more but so?

Think it no more.

\*Sigh\* So far, so good. Amelia is remembering her lines and Xellos seems to be behaving himself...  
...for the moment...

Just relax, will ya, Zel?

We had a couple of bugs in the first two scenes, but I think we've got everything worked out by now. It should be smooth sailing from here on in...

HEY!  
Let me THROUGH !!!

So try not to get too excited about-

What the hell was THAT?



I saw what happened to Rezo! Where's he been taken?

I MUST find him! Rezo! Where are you my darling?



Eris! What are you doing here backstage? We have a scene going on! Everyone must be QUIET!!!

Well, YOU'RE not being very quiet, Mr. Director Man... Tell me.... What have you done with my beloved Red Priest?



At that moment, in the Green Room...

Okay. I think I have everything I need...

Unless you can think of something ELSE I might need...

Just some advice: Watch your step. Especially on staircases...



Well, here I go...

\*Sigh\* Rezo's understudy... Once again, I'm playing second fiddle to the great Red Priest...



I said, go away! We're trying to perform a play here!

I'm not leaving until I've seen Rezo and made sure he's okay!

You'll find him resting in the Green Room...

Uh-oh...



Now get  
lost ! Shoo !

The Green  
Room... Where  
is tha--

GASP !

♡ Rezo ! ♡

GLOMP!

Oh ! You're  
all right ! I was  
SO worried !

Eris !  
What ARE you  
doing ?

\*GASP\*  
Kopii !


Grrr ! Why  
are YOU here ?  
What have they  
done to my  
beloved Rezo ?

Can't be any  
worse than what you've  
done to your hair...

GRRRRR

Uh, Zel...  
I think we have  
a situation  
developing  
here...

QUIET !  
An important  
part of the  
scene is  
coming up...



Prince Phil is  
about to make his  
big entrance...

I shall the  
effect of this  
good lesson keep  
as watchman  
to my heart.

Be wary, then;  
best safety lies in fear.  
Youth to itself rebels,  
though no one else  
near.

Show me the  
steep and thorny  
way to heaven,  
whiles, like a  
puffed and reckless  
libertine...

But, good my  
brother, do not, as some  
ungracious pastors do,

O, fear  
me not...

...HIMSELF the  
primrose path of  
dalliance treads...

Ahem...

I stay too long.  
But here my father  
comes...


Yet here,  
Laertes? Aboard,  
aboard for  
shame!

The wind sits  
in the shoulder of  
your sail, and you  
are stayed for.

There, my  
blessing with thee.

And these few  
precepts in thy memory  
look thou character.





Give thy thoughts no tongue, nor any unproportioned thought his act. Neither a borrower nor a lender be...

...For loan oft loses both itself and friend.

YES! JUSTICE! Become a champion of the weak...

...the poor, the oppressed! The huddled masses yearning to breathe free!

Just play along with me, okay, Amelia? It's time to show this audience some REAL acting! Let's dazzle them with Justice Speech #78!

Fight for the truth with a pure heart and victory will always be yours!

Uh. Okay...

This above all: to thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man.

"Look out for Number One, then. Heh. Can do..."

--And wherever you go my son... Remember to keep JUSTICE in your heart always...

Err.. JUSTICE?

Huddled masses? Uh... Daddy... I don't remember reading anything like THAT in the script...

Uh...Phil... Amelia... Don't you guys think you're going just a little TOO far off script here?

Our illustrious director isn't going to like this...

At that moment, backstage...

WHAT are Prince Phil and Amelia DOING??!!



They've gone  
COMPLETELY  
off-script!

If this keeps  
up, we'll NEVER  
get the story  
back on track!



\*PSSST!\*  
<<Prince Phil! What  
ARE you trying to pull  
here? Why aren't you  
sticking to what's  
written in the  
script?>>

<<Oh, I was  
just thinking that  
Polonius' part  
needed a little  
re-tooling...>>



Grrr...  
Listen up!  
Shakespeare was  
one of the  
greatest  
dramatists of  
ALL time!

<<I'm using a technique  
called "ad-libbing" to put a  
different spin on his character!  
I just KNOW if he were a little  
more justice-minded, the audience  
would find him much more easy  
to sympathize with!>>

Y-You're  
"ad-LIBBING"?  
In a Shakes-  
pearean  
PLAY ???

A MASTER of  
characterization!  
You...don't...  
second-guess....  
SHAKESPEARE !!!



Now get back  
to doing the scene  
the way HE  
wrote it !!!

WELL!  
ALL-RIGHT  
then....

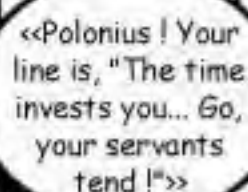
Unnnhhhh....

..Most humbly  
do I take my  
leave, my lord...

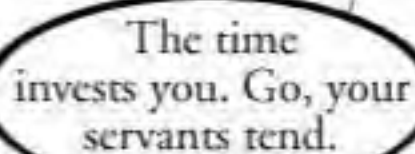
Can I go  
to France  
now?

..And do I  
have to come  
back?

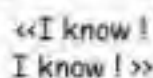




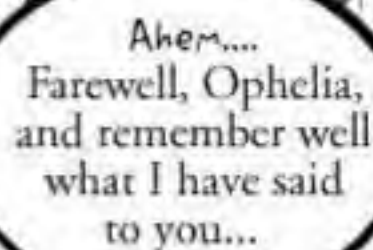
«Polonius! Your line is, "The time invests you... Go, your servants tend!"»



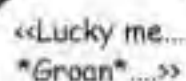
The time invests you. Go, your servants tend.



«I know!  
I know!»



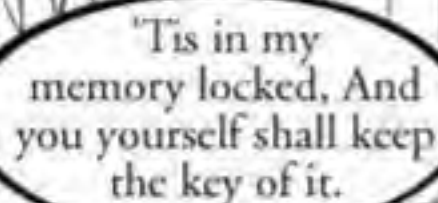
Ahem....  
Farewell, Ophelia,  
and remember well  
what I have said  
to you...



«Lucky me...  
\*Groan\*...»



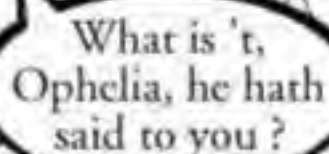
Farewell....



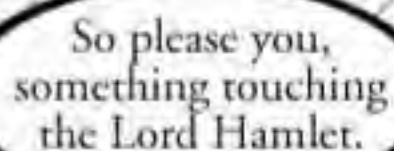
'Tis in my  
memory locked, And  
you yourself shall keep  
the key of it.



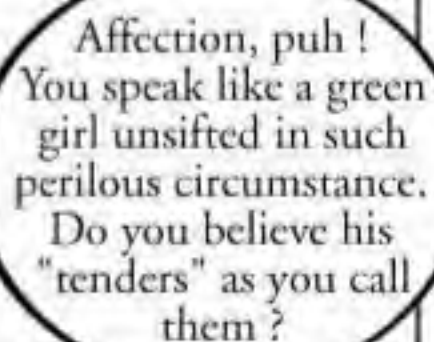
With his son  
now departing for  
France, Polonius now  
turns his attention  
towards his daughter,  
using this meeting  
as a chance to  
dispense some worth-  
while fatherly  
advice...



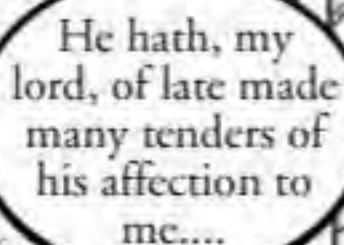
What is 't,  
Ophelia, he hath  
said to you?



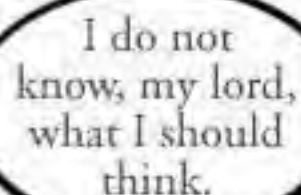
So please you,  
something touching  
the Lord Hamlet.



Affection, puh!  
You speak like a green  
girl unsifted in such  
perilous circumstance.  
Do you believe his  
"tenders" as you call  
them?



He hath, my  
lord, of late made  
many tenders of  
his affection to  
me....



I do not  
know, my lord,  
what I should  
think.

Marry, I will teach you. Think yourself a baby, that you have ta'en these tenders for true pay, which are not sterling.

My lord, he hath importuned me with love in honorable fashion--

Well... It SEEMS everything's getting back on track, but I can't help but wonder what's going to go wrong next...

## Backstage...

Allright. I'm ready for the next scene. Where do I go?

I've... taken care of Eris. You won't have to worry about her anymore...

Oh my... You didn't KILL her again, did you?

Kopii!

I thought you and Eris were going to fight each other. What happened?

Of course not! Nowadays, I know better than to resort to such irrational methods when it comes to dealing with my problems...

I dealt with her in a mature and efficient manner...

HELP!

I can't SEE! Kopii! You big DUMB JERK!!





I can't see! I can't SEE!

Oh. So THAT would explain why you're dressed like that...



Allright! From now on, I want everyone to shut up and behave themselves!



Kopii, get your helmet back and get ready to make your big entrance.

As soon as Phil and Amelia finish out there, the curtain goes up!

In few, Ophelia, do not believe his vows, for they are specious.

I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth have you slander any moment leisure as to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.



Look to it, I charge you, Come your ways!



Look to-- ARGGGH!!

What is it, Daddy?



This is the first time... I've ever had to make a speech...

...without being able to use the word, "JUSTICE" anywhere in it....



Hang in there, Daddy... We're almost done with the scene...



I shall obey, my lord.

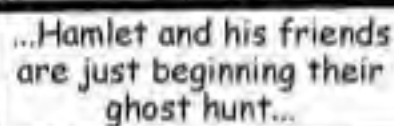


And so, Polonius warns his daughter about the dangers she is risking...



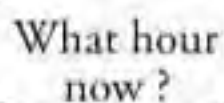
**CAN** Ophelia follow her father's advice to stay away from Hamlet?

Meanwhile, out in the castle courtyard...

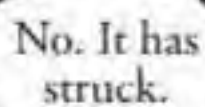


The air bites  
shrewdly; it is  
very cold.

It is a  
nipping and an  
eager air.



I think it  
lacks of  
twelve...



Look, my  
lord, it  
comes !

Angels and  
ministers of grace,  
defend us !





It beckons  
you to go away  
with it as if it  
some impart-  
ment did  
desire to you  
alone...

It waves  
you to a more  
removed ground,  
but do not go  
with it.

No, by  
no means.

Why,  
what  
should  
be the  
fear?

I do not set my  
life at a pin's fee. And  
for my soul, what can it  
do to that, being a thing  
immortal as itself?

It waves  
me forth again.  
I'll follow it.

It appears as if something is  
rotten in the state of Denmark.  
Hamlet breaks free from his  
friends and rushes forward to  
follow the ghost...

Whither wilt  
thou lead me?

Speak.  
I'll go no  
further...

Mark  
me.



I will.

My hour is almost come when I to sulf'rous and tormenting flames must render up myself.

Alas, poor ghost!

Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing to what I shall unfold.

Speak. I am bound to hear.

What?

So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

I am thy father's spirit...

Doomed for a certain term to walk the night and for the day confined to fast in fires till the foul crimes done in my days of nature are burnt and purged away.

But that I am forbid to tell the secrets of my prison house, I could a tale unfold whose lightest word would harrow up thy soul...


But this eternal blazon must not be to ears of flesh and blood. List, list, O list! If thou didst ever thy dear father love...

Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder!

FLIP!

MURDER?





Murder  
most foul.


I find  
thee apt;

Now, Hamlet,  
hear. 'Tis given out  
that, sleeping in my  
orchard, a serpent  
stung me.

So the whole  
ear of Denmark  
is by a forged  
process of my  
death rankly  
abused.




But know, thou  
noble youth, the serpent  
that did sting thy  
father's life now wears  
his crown.



O, my  
prophetic soul!  
My uncle!

Ay, that  
incestuous, that  
adulterate beast,  
with witchcraft  
of his wit, with  
traitorous  
gifts--


Haste me to  
know 't, that I,  
with wings as  
swift as  
meditation or  
the thoughts of  
love, may  
sweep to my  
revenge.



--won to his  
shameful lust the  
will of my seeming-  
virtuous queen.

O, Hamlet,  
what a falling off  
was there!

From me,  
whose love was of  
that dignity that  
it went hand in hand  
even with the vow I  
made to her in  
marriage, and to  
decline upon a wretch  
whose natural gifts  
were poor to those  
of mine...



But soft, methinks  
I scent the morning air.  
Brief let me be....

Sleeping within my orchard,  
my custom always of the  
afternoon....

Upon my secure  
hour, thy uncle stole...



With juice of  
cursed hebona in a  
vial....

And in the porches  
of my ears did pour the  
leprous distilment...



THUD !!

GYACK!!





Thus was I, sleeping, by  
a brother's hand, of life,  
of crown, of queen  
at once dispatched...



O horrible, O  
horrible, most  
horrible! If thou  
hast nature in thee,  
bear it not.

Let not the royal  
bed of Denmark be a  
couch for luxury and  
damned incest.

Adieu,  
adieu, adieu.  
Remember  
me...

Fare thee well  
at once. The glowworm  
shows the matin to  
be near and 'gins to  
pale his uneffectual  
fire.

As the rising sun  
approaches, the old king  
exhorts his son to seek  
justice for the crime  
committed against him.

Ay, thou poor  
ghost, whiles memory  
holds a seat in this  
distracted globe--

WHO-AAHH!!

CRASSSHH !!

RATTLE !

THUD !

Son of a--  
YAAAAAGGHH!!!  
DW !!!



Waitress....  
Separate checks,  
please...



\*Sigh\*  
Two cast members  
seriously injured, only  
14 more to go...



Lord  
Hamlet!

Hamlet's friends  
rush to his aid,  
fearing the worst  
from his encounter  
with the ghost. They  
find the prince in a  
deep state of shock...



How is 't,  
my noble  
lord?

What news,  
my lord?

Good my  
lord, tell it.

No, You  
will reveal it.


Not I, my  
lord, by heaven.

How say you,  
then? Would heart  
of man once think  
it? But you'll be  
secret?

O, wonderful!

Touching this  
vision here, it is an  
honest ghost--that  
let me tell you. For  
your desire to know  
what is between us,  
o'ermaster it as you  
may...






And now,  
good friends, give  
me one poor  
request.


What is 't,  
my lord? We  
will...

Never make  
known what you have  
seen tonight.


Swear upon  
my sword.



Urrk....  
Swear.

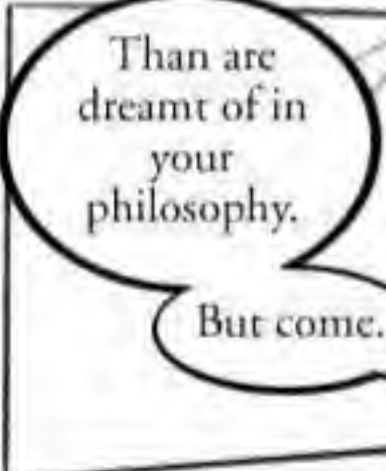


Swear  
by his  
sword.




O day and  
night, but this  
is wondrous  
strange.

There are  
more things in  
heaven and  
earth,  
Horatio...




Than are  
dreamt of in  
your  
philosophy.

But come.



I perchance  
hereafter shall think  
meet to put an antic  
disposition on—




Swearmfffurk...



Uh-oh...  
errr...ahhh...  
Rest, rest  
perturbed  
spirit...


It looks  
like he IS  
resting.  
Director  
Man...

Uh,  
I think  
he may be  
UN-  
CON-  
SCIOUS.




\*Sigh\*...

So gentlemen,  
With all my love  
I do commend me  
to you...



Let us go  
in together.  
And still  
your fingers  
on your lips,  
I pray...

The time is  
out of joint.  
O cursèd  
spite!




That ever I  
was born to set  
it right!




Okay ladies.  
You grab Kopil's  
arms, Gourry and  
I will grab his  
legs...

And so, our first act concludes with our noble  
hero staring bleak Destiny in the face, his  
world lying in shattered pieces at his feet,  
with deceit and darkness looming over him  
like a cold shadow...



For Hamlet  
knows  
that it is he alone  
who must rid his  
kingdom of the  
evil which now  
infests it. But  
how to set about  
such a daunting  
task is a matter  
which fills him  
with worry...



After all, his adversary is none other than  
the most powerful man in the kingdom, his  
own uncle. Will Hamlet have what it takes to  
successfully carry out his crusade for justice?  
Or will he be crushed underfoot by the forces  
which will surely seek to destroy him?

Stay  
tuned  
for  
**ACT  
TWO!**



**And so,  
the first  
act of  
our play  
has come  
to a  
success-  
ful  
end...**



**...although not without  
a FEW casualties...**

**...chief among  
them, the sanity  
of a certain  
chimera...**



How  
could you  
do that to  
me? How  
could you go  
off-script  
like that?

We're  
sorry, Mr.  
Zelgadis. We  
didn't mean to  
make you mad. We  
were only trying  
to make the  
play better by  
making it more  
...inspiring.



Grrr!  
This is supposed  
to be a serious  
play! Not a soapbox  
for your justice-  
crazed  
propaganda!

The NEXT  
time you pull  
something like  
that, I'd appre-  
ciate it if it  
wasn't during  
one of MY  
productions!



Well, Mr. Zelgadis,  
perhaps YOUR kind of  
productions aren't the  
kind of things that the  
Seyruun Royal Ministry of  
Culture SHOULD be  
sponsoring. This play of  
yours DOES seem excess-  
ively gloomy... Perhaps  
our grant money could  
best be spent elsewhere...



Now  
w-wait a  
minute!

AFTER  
tonight's  
opening perform-  
ance?



Y-You're  
taking this all  
wrong! I AM open  
to new ideas on the  
interpretation of  
this play...

Surely we  
could discuss  
this matter and  
come to some kind  
of compromise  
solution...

Allright  
then. Later  
tonight...



\*Sigh\*  
Dammitall...



So, Zel....  
Prince Phil is footing  
the bill for this whole  
thing... Well THAT  
explains a lot!



It would explain why you cast Amelia in the role of the female lead, even though she's nothing LIKE Ophelia. And even though there are better actresses around who could--

Of course I would ! And with Amelia's upbeat outlook on life, she'd make a much more ideal Horatio...

Actresses like YOU, you mean ? You think YOU'd make a good tragic heroine ?

No. It wouldn't work. She's got too much of a figure...

Oh, I SEE... SHE'S got too much of a figure...

Is that the REAL reason you made her your love interest in this play Mr. Director ?

No ! NO ! I gave her the lead because... she's not as good an actress as you are !

What I mean is, she's good enough to play the female lead, but she's not good enough to play a man...

Er... She hasn't got YOUR versatility...

...is a FIGURE !

No, she hasn't... All SHE'S got...

Yes ! Exactly ! NO ! WAAAAIIIIIIIT !!!!

FIREBALL !!

BOOM !!





Well folks,  
it's First Inter-  
mission time ! And this  
is Princess Amelia  
wil Tesla  
Seyruun !

Nice going,  
Lina...  
\*coff coff\*  
Vrumugen ! Get  
the fire  
extinguisher !  
\*COFFI\*



Speaking to  
you as a duly  
appointed  
representative  
of the Royal  
Seyruun  
Ministry of  
Culture...

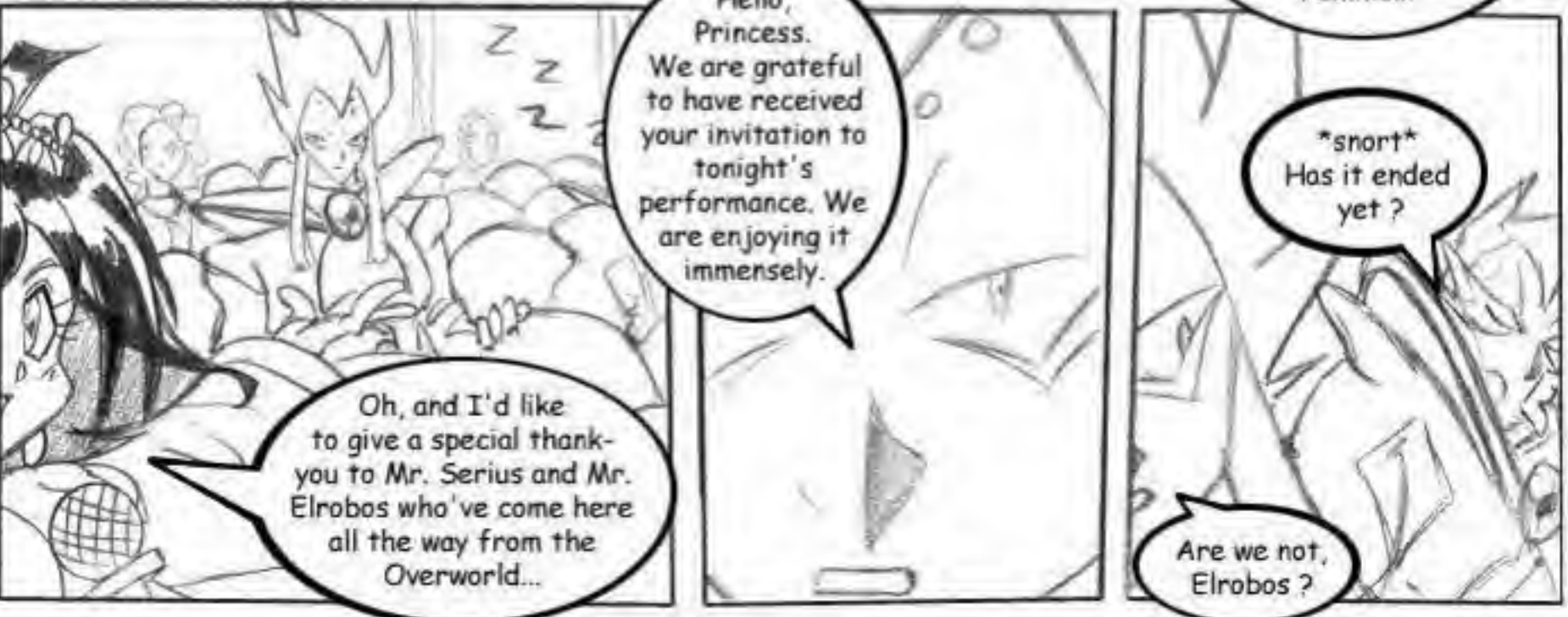
...And on  
behalf of the  
head of the  
Ministry, who has  
stepped out for a  
while, probably on  
some...important  
business...

♪  
Naga in the sk-y-y-y with  
diamonds ! (Hic!) ♪  
Naga in the sk-y-y-y with  
diamonds ! ♪



So, in  
her place, I  
shall be out  
and about visiting  
with the  
esteemed  
members of  
tonight's  
audience...

...But first I'd  
like to thank several  
groups who've made it out  
to tonight's play, among  
them, the Atlas City Brass  
Rackets Association, and the  
Sacred Sisterhood of the  
Fascist Feminists of  
Femille...




Hello,  
Princess.  
We are grateful  
to have received  
your invitation to  
tonight's  
performance. We  
are enjoying it  
immensely.


Oh, and I'd like  
to give a special thank-  
you to Mr. Serius and Mr.  
Elrobos who've come here  
all the way from the  
Overworld...

\*snort\*  
Has it ended  
yet ?

Are we not,  
Elrobos ?



Hm. I thought we had invited Mr. Almace too. Where might he be?




I am sorry I am late. Have I missed much of the performance?




My apologies. I had difficulty in finding a place to park.

Here I am...

Only the entire first act...



Might I suggest, princess, that the Atlas City Council look into ways of providing adequate special-events parking for the benefit of those of its visitors who may try to attend such occasions?




Yes, Serius and I have noticed that your time-management skills seem to be sorely lacking...


As are many of your other skills...

Might WE suggest, Almace, that the next time you try to attend a special event in another universe that you plan on starting out earlier?


I believe that these and other perceived shortcomings of yours...



...Are what led Elrobos into believing that it was necessary to terminate you towards the end of TRY... Keep that in mind, will you?



You know, Serius, Vegeta from Dragonball Z called me recently... He wants you to give him his hairstyle back.

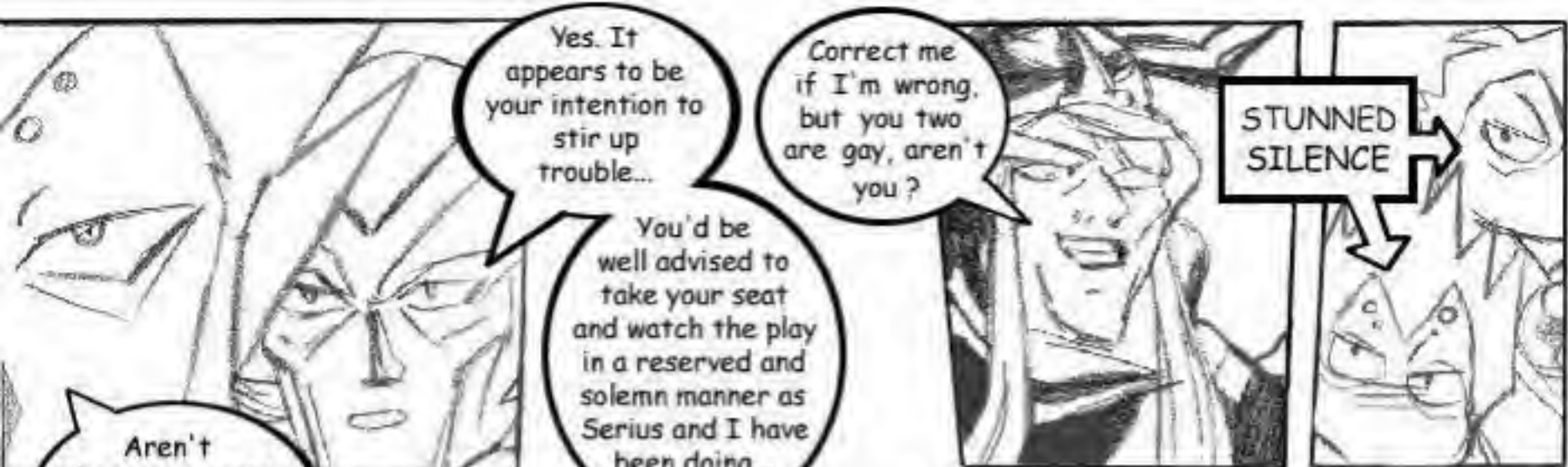


WHAT was that you just said?



Nothing, Pinky. Don't worry your pointy little head about it. Now move your ass so I can sit down...





Yes. It appears to be your intention to stir up trouble...

Correct me if I'm wrong, but you two are gay, aren't you?

STUNNED SILENCE

You'd be well advised to take your seat and watch the play in a reserved and solemn manner as Serious and I have been doing...

Aren't these comments just a little OOC for you, Almace?

Ha! I always suspected it...

Almace! Have you gone insane?... Wh-what are you trying to insinuate?



Oh my! It's almost time for Act Two to start! I'd better be getting backstage...



Well, loyal viewers, until next intermission... This is Princess Amelia...

Signing off... Over and out!

Hey! The floor of this theater is all sticky! I wonder why THAT might be... Or do I really want to know, ...gentlemen?



NEXT intermission, Daddy, YOU'RE going out to do the interviews with the members of the theater audience!

I'll stick to acting! I only hope Act Two goes more smoothly than the last one!

## Hamlet: the Manga Act Two

In the first act of our story, the young Prince Hamlet learned of the shocking murder of his beloved father by his scheming and power-hungry Uncle Claudius...

Some months have now passed since the night of that terrible discovery, and during that time, our hero has begun to undergo an unsettling change in personality...

Those who are closest to the prince have begun to notice his slow and inexorable slide into melancholy and despair, but as to what could be the cause of such behavior...

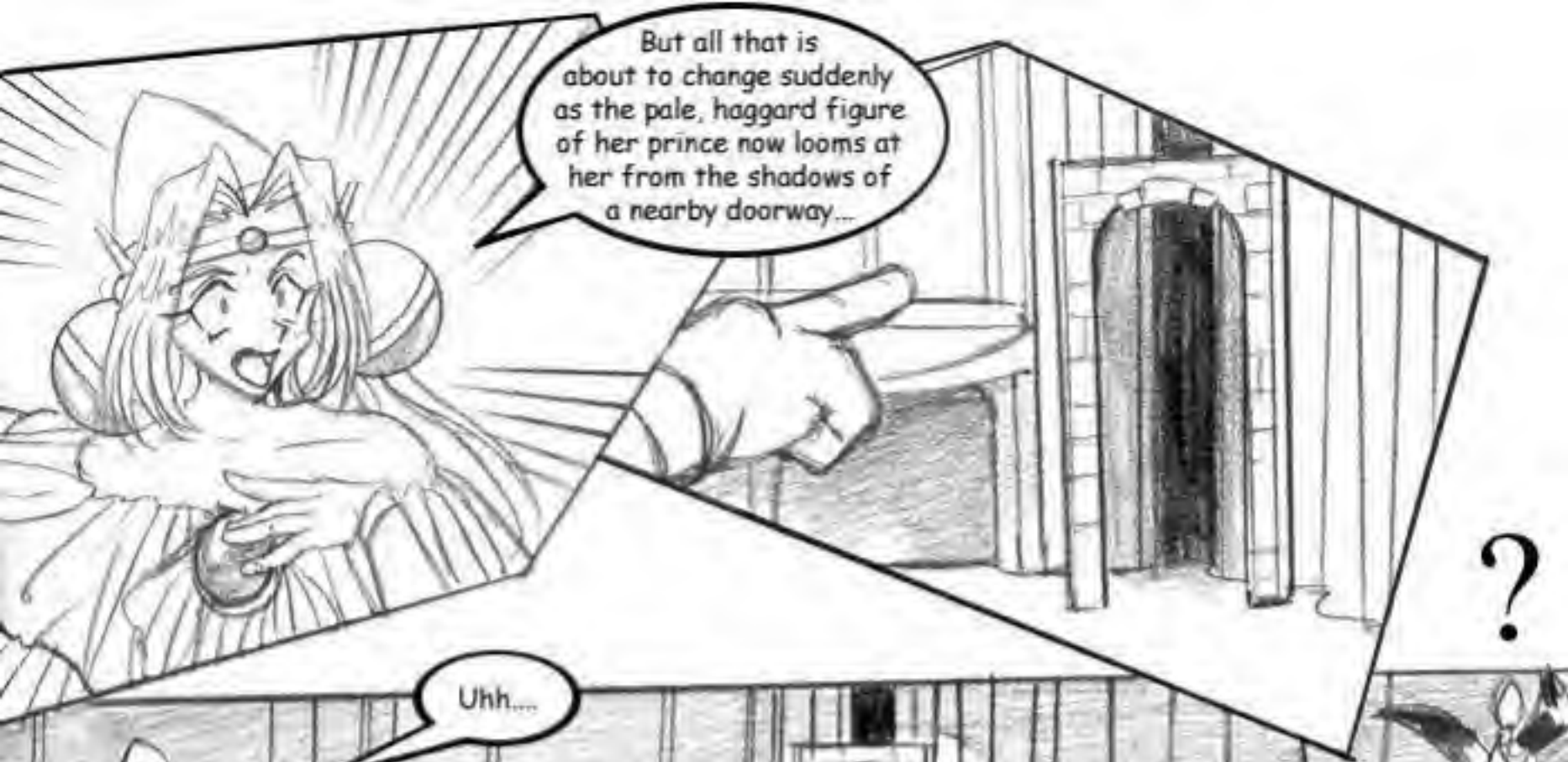
...to most people, THAT remains a profound mystery...

Still, life goes on within the confines of the castle...

As Scene One opens, we see the Lady Ophelia sitting in her chambers, hard at work with her usual, wholesome pursuits...

During the past few weeks, she has obeyed her father's command to stay away from her beloved Hamlet, so she is thus far completely unaware of the strange change in behavior which has come over him...










Damn you, Lina! Of all the things you could've done, why'd you have to FIREBALL me?

Now my costume's ruined! I'll have to get Rezo to cast one of his "Time-Reversal" spells on it to get it back in order...




My my, Zelgadis. That's quite a make-up job you've done on yourself! It really DOES look like you've just been loosed out of hell!

Make-up?


AHEM! ALL THAT IS ABOUT TO CHANGE AS THE PALE, HAGGARD FIGURE OF HER PRINCE NOW LOOMS AT HER FROM THE SHADOWS OF A NEARBY DOORWAY!!!

Come ON, Zelgadis, LOOM already!




Hey, Mr. Olivier... Isn't that your cue?


Wha--?




Oh DAMN! Hold on! I'm coming!!!



Gee. I wonder what's taking Mr. Zelgadis so long to--



GASP!



EEK!!!





For a few terrifying moments, his reddened eyes run down the length of her body, examining her from head to toe. Then, after what seems like an eternity, he lets out a long sigh and stumbles back out of the room, his cold eyes never leaving her for a second.



My lord,  
as I was sewing  
in my closet,  
Lord Hamlet,  
with his doublet  
all unbraced...

His  
stockings fouled,  
ungartered, and  
down-gyved to  
his ankle, pale  
as his shirt, his  
knees knocking  
each other,

And with a  
look so piteous  
in purport...



As if he had  
been loosed out  
of hell to speak  
of horrors--

he comes  
before me.

Mad for  
thy love?

What said  
he?

My lord, I  
do not know...

But truly  
I do fear it.

He took me by the wrist  
and held me hard. Then  
goes he to the length of  
all his arm, and, with the  
other hand thus o'er his  
brow, he falls to such  
perusal of my face, as he  
would draw it.

Long stayed he so. At last, a  
little shaking of mine arm, and  
thrice his head thus waving up  
and down, he raised a sigh so  
piteous and profound  
as it did seem to shatter  
all his bulk and end  
his being.







That done, he  
lets me go and, with his  
head over his shoulder  
turned, he seemed to find  
his way without his eyes,  
for out o'doors he  
went without their  
helps...

And to the  
last bended their  
light on me.



Come, go  
with me. I will  
go seek the  
king.

This is the  
very ecstasy of  
love,



Um, Daddy...  
I thought we weren't  
going to do anymore of that  
JUSTICE stuff tonight...  
Mr. Zeligadis doesn't  
like it...

Whose violent property  
fordoes itself and leads the will  
to desperate undertakings as  
oft as any passions under heaven--  
like, for instance, the passion for  
JUSTICE !!!!



Wha--?  
Oh yeah.  
Right...  
FINE, then...

\*AHEM!\*

I am sorry. What,  
have you given him any  
hard words of late?



No, my  
good lord, but as  
you did command  
I did repel his letters  
and denied his  
access to me.



That hath made him mad. I am sorry that with better heed and judgment I had not coted him. I feared he did but trifle and meant to wrack thee.

But beshrew my jealousy!

Come, go we to the King. This must be known, which, being kept close, might move...



More grief to hide than hate to utter love.



Polonius, with daughter in hand, rushes off to find King Claudius...



Being a man of an ambitious nature, he is no doubt pleased at the thought that his daughter might become the next Queen of Denmark...

But as he'll soon learn and as we'll soon see, ambition makes for a dangerous compass to guide one's actions by...



Certain in his mind that he now knows the true cause for Hamlet's disturbing behavior...



Well Daddy, I sure hope Mr. Zelgadis is happy with how THAT scene turned out...



Mr. Zelgadis?

Please hurry...







Look, I'm working as fast as I can. Lina really did a number on your costume.

If it were, I'd reverse it back to the time you asked me to be in your play at which point, I'd shove that script down your --

You think reversing time is an easy thing to do?

What was that, grandfather/great-grandfather?



Hey, Director Man! Phil and Amelia are back... Isn't it time for Scene 2 to begin?

Y-Yes...



Uh-oh. Where ARE they?

Uh, who?

They said they'd be here by now! They said they'd be on time!

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern! Don't you remember? They're in the next scene!!

HEY!



Relax, Chimera Man... Don't get your tights in a bundle...

We're here... As promised...



So... You are...

YIKES!

GASP!

Gee, you'd think a guy as big as him would be hard to lose...

Th-There he is! Over there!

Heh. Don't worry. I'm here. I wouldn't miss this for the world. This'll be fun, won't it, Xellos, ol' buddy?

Why yes... My, my, Garv. You're looking well. Is that a new trenchcoat I see you wearing?

GASP!  
Garv! Why ARE you wearing that? Why aren't you in your costume?

It's stylish, but don't you think it's a little out of period for the time this play is set in?

This IS my costume! I'm going out on stage like this. You got a problem with that?

OF COURSE I do! People didn't wear trenchcoats in the Middle Ages! And they didn't sling swords over their shoulders like that, either!

You got any proof of that, Stone Boy?

GACK!!

Uhhh...

No... Not really. I suppose it isn't THAT big a deal...

After all, a little historical anachronism never hurt any play...





Now. Help me up. I have to get the next scene started...

Aww. Do you have to get up? It feels kinda nice with both of us lying here on the floor together...



Yes, but I would've preferred that we keep the tragedy confined to the stage where it belongs!

I'm wise to all your tricks. Nothing you do is going to faze me. I know you're the type that will do ANYTHING to get a rise out of someone.

Knock it off, Xellos. If you think that "yaoi routine" of yours is going to upset me tonight, you're wrong.



...even wear a ridiculously oversized codpiece, which I KNOW isn't part of the costume I designed for you and which, frankly, doesn't impress me much...



Codpiece? I'm not wearing any codpiece, Zelgadis...



.....



A A H H !!!  
A  
A  
A  
Y

Heh heh. I have to say, Zelgadis, that I certainly DO get a "rise" out of teasing you...

Mr. Zelgadis--

## Act 2 Scene 2

As was mentioned before, those close to Hamlet have begun to notice his descent into madness and melancholy...

King Claudius and Queen Gertrude, out of concern for the young prince, now try to get to the bottom of his strange behavior.

They send a message to two of Hamlet's close boyhood friends, a pair of noblemen who go by the names of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. King Claudius hopes that by having these gentlemen speak with Hamlet, that they will be able to find out what's ultimately troubling the boy.

Once the two men arrive at the castle, the king summons them to the throne room to meet with them.

Playing the part of Rosencrantz, will be the mazoku lord, Gaav, the Demon Dragon King...

And the part of Guildenstern, then, will be played by the mazoku lord of the underworld, Hellmaster Phibrizzo...

<<...Although why Zelgadis would want to give roles to these mazoku scum is beyond me...>>

I-I don't know if I can go through with this scene. Why does it have to be THOSE MONSTERS?

Be brave, darling.. We'll get through this alright...







I entreat you  
both that, being of  
so young days brought  
up with him...

POLISH  
POLISH  
POLISH

...that you  
vouchsafe your rest here  
in our court some little  
time, so by your companies  
to draw him on to  
pleasures,



...and to gather  
so much as from occasion  
you may glean, [whether  
aught to us unknown  
afflicts him thus] that,  
opened, lies within our  
remedy.



Good gentlemen,  
he hath much talked of  
you, and sure I am two men  
there is not living to whom  
he more adheres...

Sweaty  
palms.  
Ick.

If it will please  
you to show us so  
much gentry and good-  
will as to expend your  
time with us a while...



For the supply  
and profit of our  
hope, your visitation  
shall receive such  
thanks--

As fits a king's  
remembrance.

Rosencrantz  
steps forward with  
a reply for the  
royal couple.





Ahem...



A-HEM...



Both your  
Majesties might,  
by the sovereign  
power--



Both your  
Majesties might,  
by the sovereign  
power--



?!

!



Hey kid. I'M  
Rosencrantz,  
remember ?



Yeah, well,  
I wanna be  
Rosencrantz. You can  
be the other guy,  
Whatsisname...



I don't WANT  
to be the other guy.  
I want to be the guy whose  
part I practiced for--  
Rosencrantz !

T.S.  
I'M Rosencrantz  
now...



Grr! You irritating little Hellmaggot! I'M Rosencrantz!

No you're NOT! You're a big ugly stupid-head! I'M Rosencrantz!



By the way, Garv, Inspector Gadget called! He wants his wardrobe back!

Oh yeah? Well, Barney the Purple Dinosaur called, he wants YOU to be the president of his fan club!



Gaaahhh...

Does not!  
Does too!  
JERK!  
Hellbrat!



Would you two get it together and stop FIGHTING ?!!

FREAK!

SQUIRT!



\*Sigh\* Well, it looks like THIS could go on for a while...

Big orange baboon!  
Short-pantsed, girly-voiced bratling!

Face-which-scares-small-children-man!

Stop it! I mean it! C'mon you guys! Stop fighting! You're both thousands of years old! Why can't you be a little more mature?

Funny-Faced-wets-his-own-pants-Bastard-Boy!

Heh, Martina. It now seems like we have some free time on our hands...

Yes, darling. It does...





You know, all of this shouting and releasing of passionate emotion gives me the mind to do something I've been itching to do all evening...



And what might THAT be, Zangie?



Zangie?



Gourry! I challenge you to a duel! Quick! Grab your sword of Light and meet me in the back of the theater!

Gee, I dunno...



Come on! This is the perfect chance to finally find out which of us is the best swordsman of all! I have my Howling Sword with me...



Umm...but... Zeldadis might not like it if we went off to fight a duel...

Oh, HE won't notice! I get the feeling he's going to be tied up for a LONG time with those two mazoku lords... Come on! Where's your warrior's spirit? Your sense of honor as a fighter and a mercenary?



W-Well... I left my Sword of Light in my dressing room. I'll have to go get it!



Oh NO, you don't, Gourry! You're not going to get yourself into a fight NOW!



You're going to stay here and help us FINISH this stupid play so we can have us that cast party buffet as soon as possible!



Oh...I suppose... Oh well. By the time I fetched my Sword of Light, Zel might be done arguing with the dark lords anyway...



HERE you are, Gourry! Your Sword of Light! I took the liberty of fetching it for you!

So now you WILL have the time to fight your duel if you want to!



Xellos? Just WHAT do you think you're up to?

You're not against the idea of "friendship", are you?



Encouraging these two men to fight each other at a time like this! You're up to your old game of trying to cause chaos and trouble!

Not at all, Filia! I'm just trying to help out a dear old friend...

No. Just the idea of YOU.

Come on, Lina! Cut it out already! Whatever I did, I'm SORRY!



Vikes! I'm sure glad I don't have some SHREWISH woman making MY life a total misery...

Ha! Sure you are! All you men ever think about is engaging in stupid and pointless violence!



ZANGULUS !!!!





ULP!

How DARE you leave me alone with those scary monsters so you can run off and play with your sword!

My ASS you didn't!

Arghh! STAND STILL, NAMAGOMI!!!

Well, Gourry? You insensitive lout! What have you got to say for yourself?

Aah, I didn't mean to leave you alone. I'd never think to put you in any kind of danger, my sweet!

WHOMP

WOOSH

Your actions have greatly displeased the monstrous Zoamelgustav! Repent NOW!

GA-A-A-C-K!!

YARGH!

HEEYYYYY!!!



WOULD YOU  
ALL STOP  
FIGHTING  
AND ACT LIKE  
CIVILIZED  
PEOPLE  
FOR JUST  
FIVE  
FREAKIN'  
MINUTES ?!!



WELL !



Geez, Director  
Man. Don't have a  
COW...

Can we get  
you anything ?  
A glass of water ?  
Some chewable  
Prozac ? A  
psychiatrist,  
maybe ?



PANT !  
PANT !  
PANT !



Man ! I've never  
seen anyone lose their  
temper so quickly...



Yeah.  
This guy's got  
some major  
control  
issues.

We'd  
better watch  
ourselves. He  
could snap and  
go psycho  
on us...



So, have you  
two finally decided  
which of you is to  
be Rosencrantz ?



Not yet,  
but I'm sure  
if we try,  
we can come  
up with a  
way to settle  
this  
matter...



There must be some kind of civilized solution we can reach...

SOME kind of non-violent compromise we could work out...

\*Sigh\*

Hmmm...

Hey! I've got this GREAT IDEA!!

SNAP!

Well whatever it is you decide to do, PLEASE hurry...

KA-BOOM!

Huh? What th-?

Whoops.


I reaaaaally oughta get out of the habit of snapping my fingers like that whenever I get a great idea... Oh well...

Live and learn. Eh, Gary?


Owww...









Garv-sama!  
What have they  
done to you?!



Hold on, master!  
I'm coming! Wait  
for me!



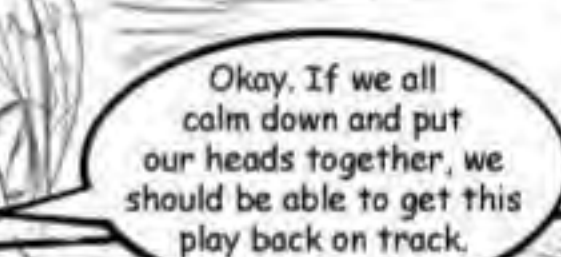
I'll make  
them all pay for  
this, Garv-sama,  
I promise!




Oh, don't  
start CRYING  
now...




\*Sniff\*  
How dare they...  
How DARE they  
do THIS to your  
illustrious  
person...



Okay. If we all  
calm down and put  
our heads together, we  
should be able to get this  
play back on track.



Gertrude!  
Where are you?  
Gertrude?



Okay everyone,  
let's start behaving  
like professional  
actors, okay? I want  
us to go back to the  
part in the scene where  
Queen Gertrude says  
her first line...



HA-  
HAAAAA !!!

Now you see!  
NO ONE can oppose  
the servants of the mighty  
Zoamelgustav without  
reaping the fury of  
his wrath! Ha!

His dreadful  
curse is upon ye,  
O ye scoffing  
unbeliever!

You shrill,  
brazen  
BITCH! How  
DARE you mock  
the mighty  
Garv-sama!

Watch it,  
Horn Boy...

YOU watch  
it, Freaky  
Hat Man...

We'll jump ahead to the  
part in the scene where Hamlet  
first runs into his old friends,  
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

The only people who need  
to be on stage are those in  
that part of the scene. The rest  
of you, CLEAR OFF!

Yeagh! Get  
that...THING out  
of my face!

Yeagh! Get  
that...THING outta  
my face!

YOUR wife,  
you insolent  
bounty hunter!

Hey! Whose  
wife are you calling  
a bitch?

Gentlemen!  
PLEASE! No more  
fights!

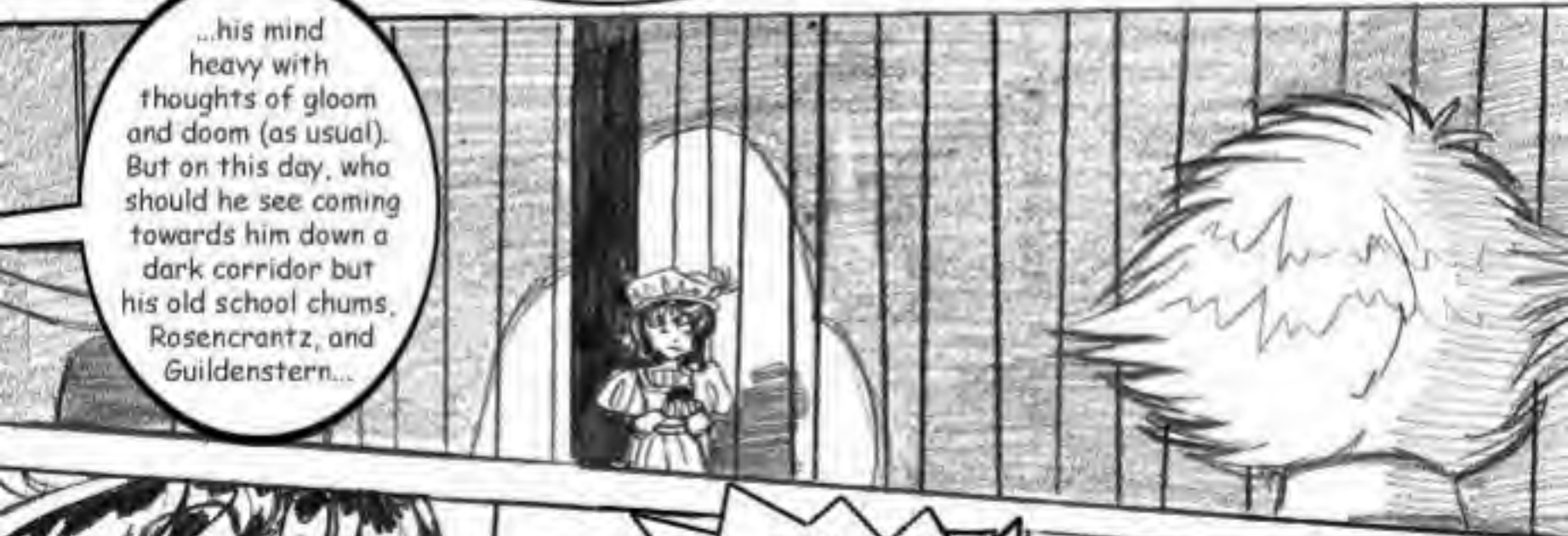
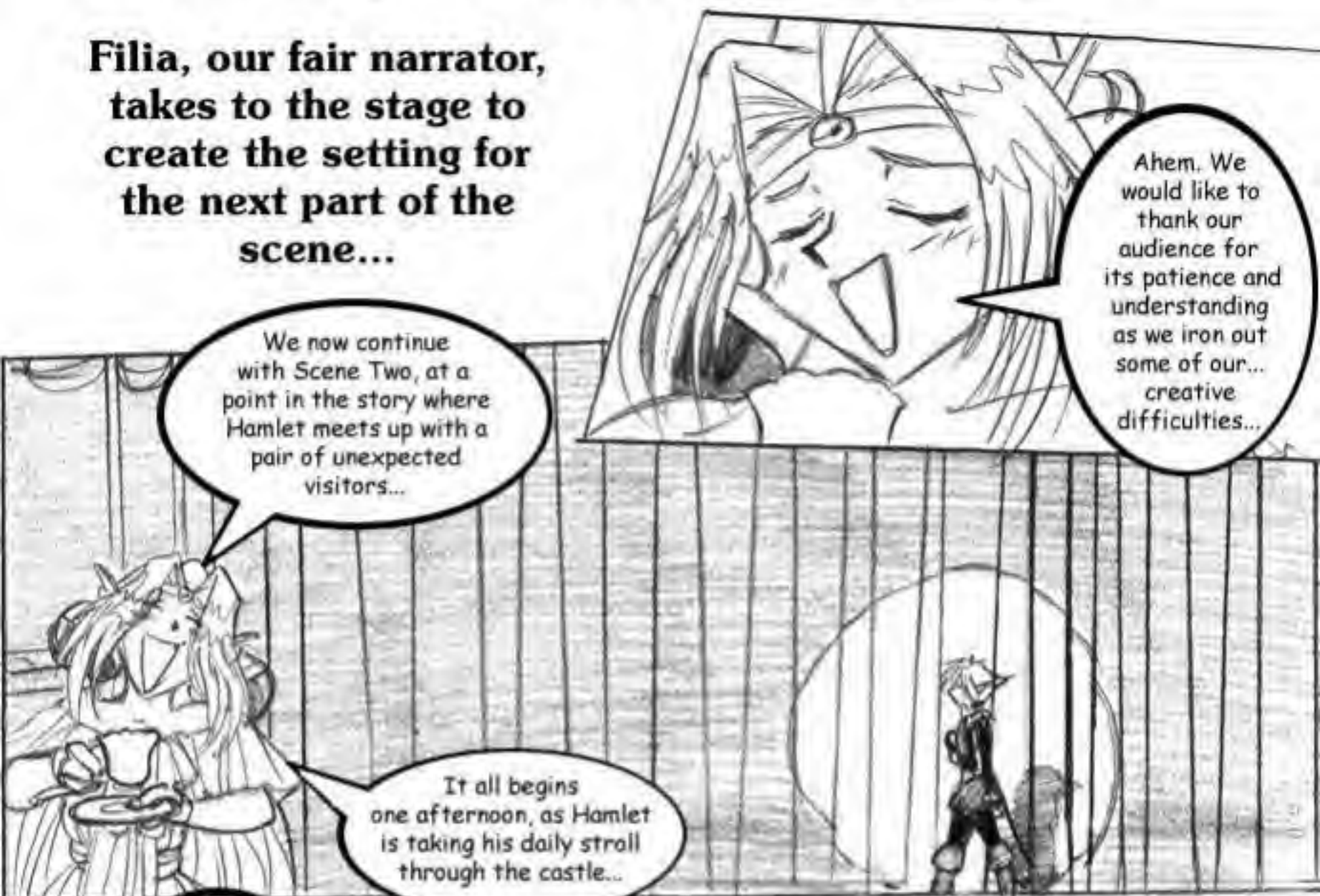
We've GOT to get  
this play up and running again.  
I know! We'll skip forward  
in the script...

Mmmmm....



**And so, within a short time, order is restored to the stage and our intrepid little band of performers are are once again able to resume their production...**

**Filia, our fair narrator, takes to the stage to create the setting for the next part of the scene...**



Er-HEM...

My excellent good friends! How dost thou, Guildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz!

Good lads, how do you both?

As the indifferent children of the Earth,

Happy in that we are not overhappy. On Fortune's cap, we are not the very button,

Neither, my lord.

Faith, her privates we...

Nor the soles of her shoe?

Then you live about her waist, or in the middle of her favors?


HEY!  
Wait a minute!

"Her PRIVATES we?"  
(Y'know, I just realized there may be SOME dialogue in this play that might not be suitable for children like me.)


In the secret parts of Fortune? O, most true! She is a strumpet.

YOU are NOT a child...






You're a centuries  
old mazoku lord!



And a very  
SENSITIVE one at that.  
And one who had no idea he'd  
be exposed to this kind of smut  
when he agreed to sign on  
to do this play...

\*Sigh\*

What have you,  
my good friends...




...deserved at  
the hands of  
Fortune that she sends  
you to prison  
thither?

Denmark's a  
prison.


Prison,  
my lord?

Then is the  
world one.



A goodly one, in  
which there are many  
confines, wards, and  
dungeons, Denmark being  
one o' th' worst.

We think not  
so, my lord.




Why then, 'tis  
none to you, for there  
is nothing either good or  
bad but thinking makes  
it so.

To visit you, my  
lord, no other  
occasion.


To me. It is a  
prison. What make  
you at Elsinore?

Were you not sent  
for? Is it your own  
inclining? Is it a free  
visitation? Come, come,  
deal justly with me.



Hamlet's tone and attitude towards his old friends suddenly changes, as he begins to suspect the true reason behind their visit. He correctly surmises that his parents may have summoned them to Elsinore in order to spy on him.

You were sent for, and there is a kind of confession in your looks which your modesties have not craft enough to color.



I will tell you why...I have of late, but wherefore I know not, lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises,

To what end, my lord?




...this majestic roof, fretted with golden fire--why, it appeareth nothing to me but a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors.

\*Sigh\* This... is SO boring. Remind me, at what point do the flowery speeches end and the mindless, bloody violence begins?

What a piece of work is a man...

...how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties,

and, indeed, it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory.



Keep your tights on, kid. It ain't for a while yet. As far as flowery speeches go, this Hamlet guy is just warming up...

in form and moving how express and admirable!



In action, how  
like an angel...

In apprehension,  
how like a god.

The beauty of  
the world, the paragon  
of animals !

And yet, to  
me, what is this  
quintessence  
of dust ?

GRR ! YOU  
LITTLE HELLMONKEY !  
I WILL GET YOU BACK FOR  
DOING THIS TO ME !  
I MEAN IT !

THAT'S  
IT ! I am  
outta here ! But  
don't think this  
is the last you'll  
be hearing from me  
tonight, half-pint !  
I'll find SOME  
way to get my  
revenge on  
you...

Temper,  
temper, G-Man.  
Tell you what.  
You behave  
yourself now and  
when this is all  
over, I'll get you  
a nice, shiny new  
urn to live in.  
Whattaya  
say ?

Dust, (or  
in YOUR case,  
Rosencrantz,  
ASH...)

Garv!  
I mean -  
Rosencrantz!

Where are  
you going?

COME  
BACK!!

Hey, don't  
sweat it, Director Man...  
I can handle both HIS  
part AND mine...

Ahem...

To think, my  
lord, if you delight not  
in man, what Lenten  
entertainment the  
players shall receive  
from you.

We coted them on  
the way and hither  
they are coming to  
offer you service.

Uh...  
Hello? Hamlet?  
You hear what  
I said?

The players  
are coming...

Players?  
\*Sigh.\* What  
players?

You know...  
Those you  
were wont to  
take such  
delight in,  
the  
tragedians  
of the  
city?

So sayeth  
the SCRIPT,  
m'lord...

The PLAYERS!  
Oh my God!

With all  
the disasters  
that have been  
happening on-  
stage lately, I  
totally forgot  
about them!

I was  
supposed to  
check and see  
if they had  
arrived at the  
theater!

I hope they  
have... And I hope  
they're in their cos-  
tumes standing where  
they're supposed  
to be...



Is it time for us to go out on stage yet?

Not yet. We wait until we hear the trumpets, THEN we go out... I think...

Rosencran--I mean, Guildenstern tells Hamlet about a band of travelling actors he had come upon while on his journey to Elsinore. At his request, the players have agreed to follow him to the castle where they have now just arrived...

So... Director Man...

Who'd you get to be the players? Anyone I'd know?

They're a band of...experienced performers. Favorites of Prince Phil...

From that expression on your face, it looks like you expect to have some trouble with them.

Oooh. I'm sure the odds of THAT happening are REAL good...

Y'know something, kid? Even if you WEREN'T a dark lord, you'd still give me the chills....

No. There shouldn't be any trouble. Not if they play their parts the way I told them to...

The travelling players now enter the castle, amid a loud flourish of trumpets.

\*Sigh\* Okay... Bring it on...



That's it!  
That's our cue!  
Time to move  
out!



Ahhh...



I have GOT  
to have a word with  
those trumpet  
players...

Evil-doers  
of the world,  
BEWARE !!



Your days  
are numbered! The  
Hour of JUSTICE  
is at hand !!



And we, the  
agents of eternal,  
burning JUSTICE  
will show you no  
mercy!



Behold!  
We are here, to  
cast light upon the  
path of righteous-  
ness!



Who the  
HELL are  
THEY?

Oh no...



Hi there,  
folks! We're the  
Peacemen Players!  
Denmark's first All-  
JUSTICE theater  
troupe!



No kidding.  
You look more like  
Denmark's  
OLDEST theater  
troupe...

\*SIGH\*

«Hi there,  
sonny ! We're here !  
What did you think of  
our big entrance ?»

Hiya folks !

Gentlemen,  
you are welcome  
to Elsinore...

No autographs  
until after the play  
is over, okay  
kids ?

«Even if you ARE  
wearing the wrong kind  
of costumes... You were all  
supposed to be dressed up as  
medieval Danish actors...»

What's that,  
Sonny ? I can't  
hear you. Speak  
up a bit...

I SAID,  
YOU'RE  
WEARING THE  
WRONG  
COSTUMES !!  
YOU'RE ALL  
SUPPOSED TO  
BE DRESSED  
LIKE MEDIEVAL  
ACTORS !!!

Oh well,  
we'll have that fixed  
in a jiffy once we've  
finished our grand, Super-  
Chango, Transformation  
Sequence !

ALLRIGHT  
EVERYBODY !  
It's MORPHING  
TI-- (whoops,  
copyright)-- IT'S  
SUPER-CHANGO  
TIME !!

Your  
grand wha-zah?

HAI !!





# WOOSH!!



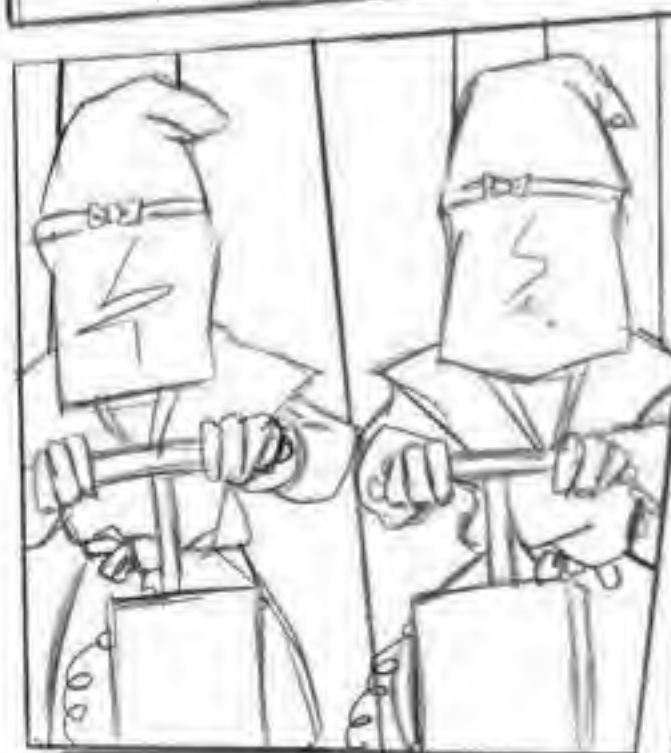
RUSTLE


RUSTLE






Peacemen  
Players  
Shakespearean  
Super-Chango  
Sequence  
COMPLETE!






Oh William...  
A sentai transformation  
sequence in a  
Shakespearean play...  
\*SIGH\*



Welllll  
cheer up....  
Coulda been  
worse...



And just  
HOW, Demon Seed,  
could it have been  
any WORSE ?




CENSORED  
CENSORED

Welllll, it  
coulda been one of  
those mildly titillating,  
NUDE Sailor Moon-type  
sentai transformation  
sequences...



That... is true...



Glad you  
guys could  
make it...



GENTLEMEN, You  
are MOST  
WELCOME !!!

Hey, Your  
Highness ! Thanks for  
lettin' us in on this  
play gig. We sure do  
appreciate it !



Well, it's  
the least I can do  
for fellow warriors  
of Justice!

What did you  
think of our latest  
special effects,  
Prince?

Excellent!  
You'll have to teach  
me how to do that  
sometime...

But of course!  
You know, in this day  
and age, acrobatics and  
amateur dramatics will  
only take you so far as a  
warrior of Justice...

...but if you've  
got some show-stopping  
special effects in your  
repertoire, then you have  
a potent weapon in your  
arsenal of--

Polonius....  
Oh, Polonius....

.....  
**POLONIUS!**

**POLONIUS !!**

If I might have a word  
with the players....

(You and the "Geezers of Justice"  
can talk shop later..).

Ahem....

You are welcome  
masters, welcome all--  
I am glad to see thee  
well...

Welcome, good  
friends...

What, my young  
lady and mistress! By'r Lady,  
your ladyship is nearer to  
heaven than when I saw you  
last by the altitude of a  
chopine.

Pray God your  
voice, like a piece of  
uncurrent gold, be not  
cracked within the  
ring.

Oh my....

**HEE HEE  
HEE WEE HEE**

Good my lord,  
will you see the players  
well bestowed?

Follow him,  
friends. We'll hear a  
play tomorrow.

Hold it,  
Player One...

YOU stay  
here...

Somewhere in  
the depths of Hamlet's  
mind, a plan is brewing.  
A plan by which he hopes to  
expose his uncle's treachery.  
At this time, the prince pulls  
the leader of the players  
aside to have a private  
word with him.

YAWN.

Dost thou hear me,  
old friend? Can you play  
"The Murder of Gonzago?"

Say, "Ay,  
my lord..."

Uh... Ay,  
my lord...

We'll ha't tomorrow  
night. You could, for a  
need, study a speech of  
some dozen or sixteen  
lines, which I would set  
down and insert in't,  
could you not?

Uhhh....







What's going on here ?  
WHERE'S my colored smoke and  
dramatic Ka-Booms ?!!

Uh... We  
dunno, Boss !  
Something went  
wrong ! We  
dunno what it  
was !



Ha haaa,  
you old justice  
geezer ! Looks like  
your special effects  
team won't be  
winning any Tony  
Awards THIS  
year...

Whaaa--



What happened ?  
How the HELL did I get  
fried ?!

WAAAAIIT  
a minute !  
Where do these  
wires lead to ?





Did you hear  
me? I said clear off!  
NOW !!!



O, what a  
rogue and peasant  
slave am I...

Sheesh. He's  
1/3 Golem, 1/3  
Demon, and 1/3  
CRABASS...

You sure  
he's only  
a THIRD?

O,  
vengeance!

Upon finding  
himself alone once  
more, Hamlet ponders  
over his next move...

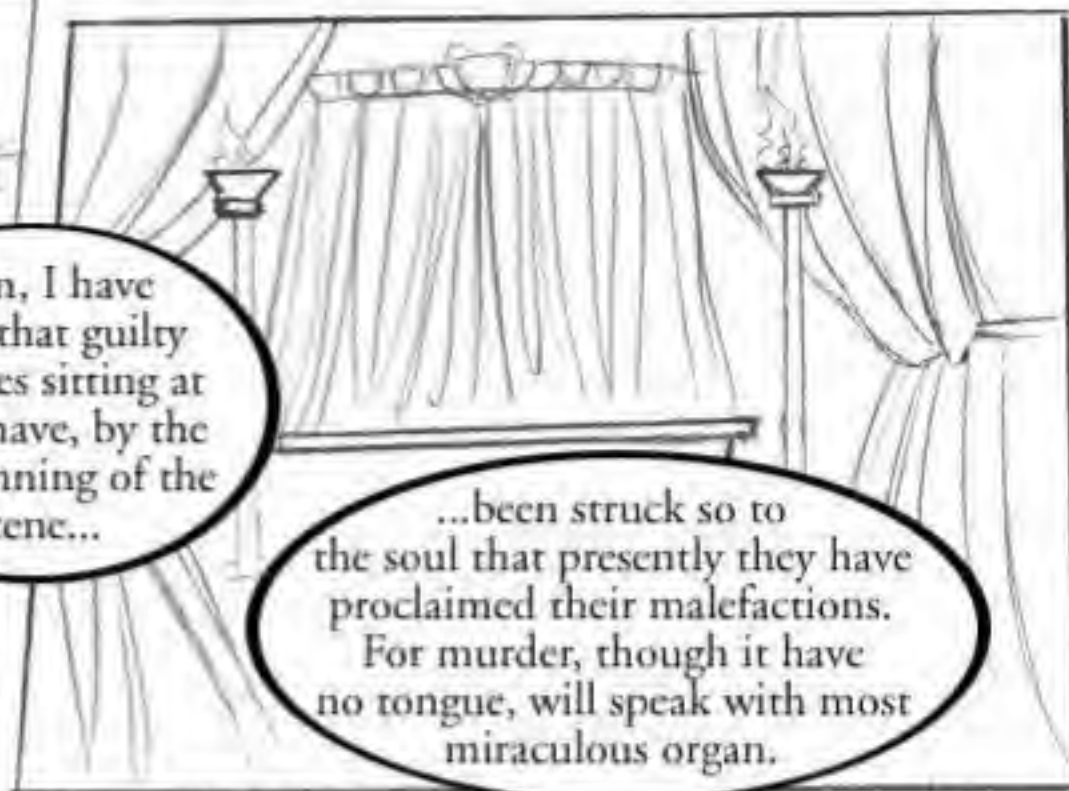
Why, what an  
ass am I! This is most  
brave, that I, the son  
of a dear father  
murdered...

...prompted to my  
revenge by heaven and  
hell, must, like a whore,  
unpack my heart with  
words and fall a-cursing  
like a very drab.

A scullion!  
Fie upon 't!  
Foh!  
About, my  
brains!



Hum, I have heard that guilty creatures sitting at a play have, by the very cunning of the scene...



...been struck so to the soul that presently they have proclaimed their malefactions. For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak with most miraculous organ.



I'll have these players play something like the murder of my father before mine uncle.



I'll observe his looks; I'll tent him to the quick.

If he do blench, I know my course...





The spirit that  
I have seen may be  
a devil, and the devil  
hath power t' assume  
a pleasing shape;



Yea, and perhaps, out of my  
weakness and melancholy, as he  
is very potent with such spirits,  
abuses me to damn me.

I'll have  
grounds  
more relative  
than this....



The play's  
the thing...  
Wherein, I'll  
catch the  
conscience  
of the  
King...



BOOM!

WHAT  
the ?..



Uh...  
What'd you  
think of that,  
sir? It sure  
made your  
speech more  
dramatic,  
didn't it?

Master Dai  
fired us, so we were  
wondering if you wouldn't  
mind us working for YOU  
from now on....

TWITCH  
TWITCH

Dammit! What do you mean  
by coming in here and ruining my closing  
soliloquy? This is supposed to be a serious  
Shakespearean drama! If I had wanted  
cheesy special effects, I'd have staged  
an Andrew Lloyd Webber  
musical!

CHUNK !!

So, that's a  
NO, right?

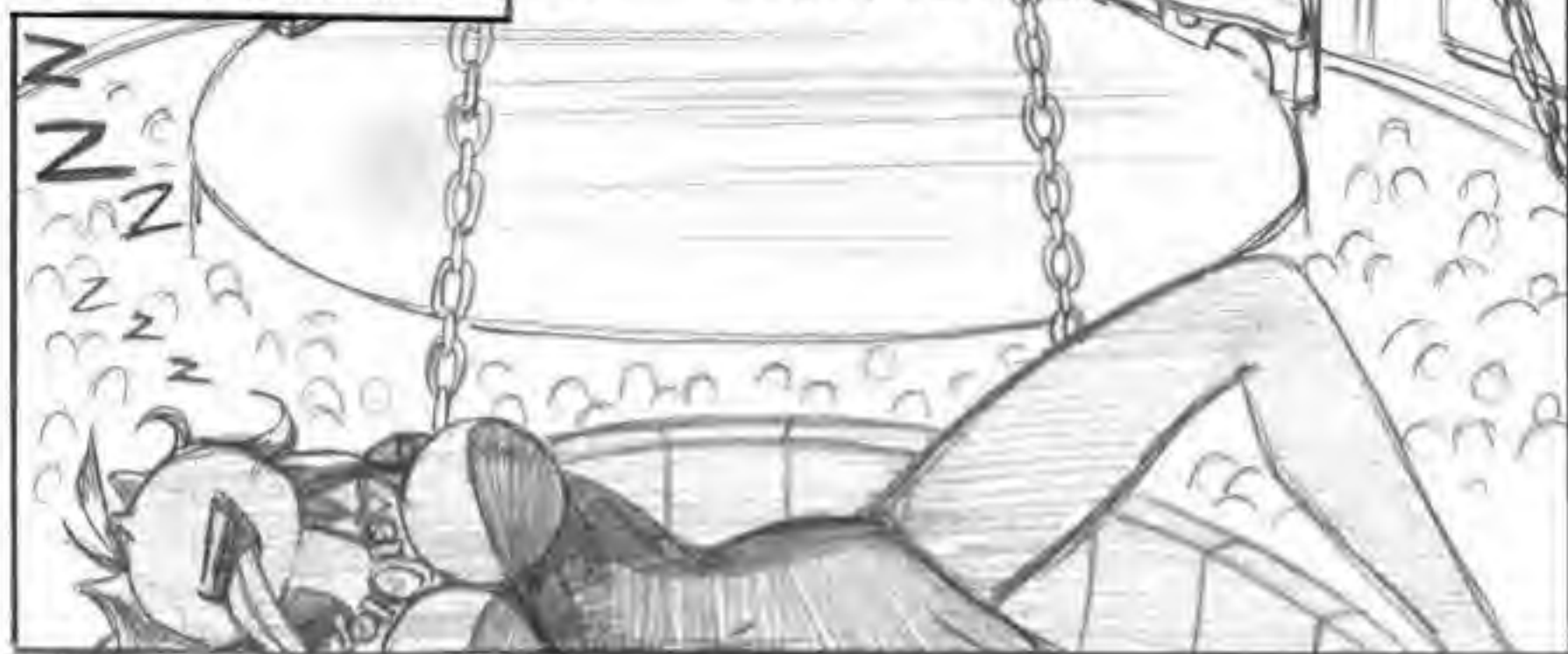
And so, Prince Hamlet puts his plan into motion,  
certain that it will soon reveal to him the truth about  
whether his uncle is a murderer. If such should  
prove to be the case, Hamlet knows the task that  
then awaits him will not be an easy or a pleasant one.  
But for now, all the prince can do is watch...plan....  
and pray.....

Stay tuned for Act Three



And so, the second act of our play comes to an end, and the stage falls silent ...

Behind the scenes, however....



Are you sure you want to do this, Miss Lina? I mean, I think I'll have enough time to do it if I hurry out there and--

Well, okay. But you're sure you know what to do..

No no. YOU stay here. I know how badly Zel wants to go over the script with you. I've got my part down pretty well. He won't mind if I'm not at the cast meeting..

SURE! Go out into the audience, mingle a little... do a few interviews... kill some time... Leave it to me!

Wh-where we going?

Come on, Gourry! Let's go!

Allright then. Thanks, Miss Lina, and good luck out there!

You and me are going to do the "Interview with the Audience" segment of the intermission. Now!



\*Sigh\* I hope Miss Lina and Mr. Gourry Don't run into any problems out there...

Go AWAY, I said! Stop following me!!



Ha haa! We're not so big and scary now, ARE we, Mr. Dragon Man!



\*Sigh\*....

Neener, neener, NEENER, you don't have a wein-

Did you hear me, you pea-brained princess? I said BEAT IT! SHOO! GET LOST!!!

AHEM!!!  
Alright, everyone! It's time to go over the script for Act 3! We're not gonna have any more SURPRISES when we take to the stage again...



FWIP!



Ch' YEAH, RIGHT....

And I'M Sailor Moon...

**At this very moment, elsewhere in the theater...**



Hi, Everybody!  
Lina Inverse, world-famous, bandit-killing heroine here, on behalf of the Seyruun Ministry of Culture. It's now MY turn to do some visiting with tonight's audience!



Uhhhh, Lina?





...If we're supposed to be interviewing the audience, then what are we doing standing in the line to the concession stand?

Look, numbskull, we don't actually have to be IN the theater area to do interviews with the audience.... THIS place is as good as any...

And if we play our cards right, we can use this whole "interview with the audience" bit to hustle our way to the front of the snack line...

Oh-mpf!



L-Sama only knows how much longer this play is going to last. It could be HOURS before we get our hands on that post-Opening Night Cast Party Buffet that Stone Boy promised us...



Miss Lina!  
Mr. Gourry!

SO then, it's time to pick our first interviewee. Whom shall it be?



Huh? Hey,  
Lina! Who is that  
lady with the green  
hair?

Long time,  
no see, you two!

That is no  
lady... THAT is  
MIWAN....



Who?

Don't you  
remember,  
Lint-Brain? That's  
Zelgadis' ex-girlfr--  
ex-BOYfr---uhhh..  
Ex-one-time-love-  
interest!

Uh, yeah...  
So I've been  
told...

But with your  
body type and the  
way you act and  
deliver your lines, you  
pull it off so effort-  
lessly! If I didn't  
know otherwise, I'd  
have really thought  
you were a male!



I certainly  
am enjoying this  
play that you and  
Mr. Zelgadis are  
putting on! You  
all are doing such  
a great job...

You especially,  
Miss Lina! You make  
for a wonderful  
Horatio! You certainly  
are convincing as a  
man!



As someone  
who's spent most of  
his life as a cross-dresser,  
I certainly know how hard  
it is to pull off that whole  
"gender-bending"  
thing...



Uh, thanks.  
What can I say?...  
I'm an actress...









Well, Miwan,  
it was nice chatting  
with you, but we have to go  
interview that guy Gourry  
wanted to talk to...



Okay, Gourry.  
it's time to go...

I'm sure he'll  
be happy to know  
YOU'RE here...



We'll tell  
Zel we ran into  
you...

GACK!



Uh, Lina...  
Who is this guy  
we're going to  
interview that I  
wanted to talk  
to?

Um... Well...  
It was....



THIS  
guy!



Good evening,  
sir. Hope we're not  
bothering you, but my  
friend and I were  
wondering...

...if you'd be  
so kind as to let  
us interview you  
for...



**AUUUGGHH!!!**



LALA !

It's you ! My beloved ! It's been SO LONG since I've seen your beautiful face !!!

VOLUN !!!  
Uh...Wh-wh-what are YOU doing here ?



Oh, I just decided to come to the theatre tonight, as a way to pass the long, lonely evening...

Since you left me, my life has been filled with long, lonely evenings...

Well, I'm real sorry to hear about that, but you know what they say, better to have loved and lost...

Eep.



However, if you ever change your mind and decide to take me back, I'd be willing to work things out with you. What we had between us was SO beautiful. Let's not just throw it away...

\*Sigh\*  
If we run into just ONE more annoying pers--

I know. And I've come to accept the fact that our time together was destined to last only a short while. I'm over my pain now. And I'm ready to go on with my life...

Whaddaya MEAN by "what we had between us ?" GACK ! Lina ! HELLLP !



OOP !!

BUMP !!

Hey ! Watch it you big, clumsy--





Oh, Miss Inverse. I'm sorry. I did not see you standing there.

Milgazia?



Hey, long time no see, Dragon Man. How are thi-



--iiiiis that ALMOND FLAVORED POCKY?



Why, yes it is...

Oooh! Strawberry-flavored Pocky! Nachos! Raisinets! Did you get ALL of this stuff at the Concession Stand?



Where else?

Well, Milgazia, my man, it was real nice to make your acquaintance, but I gotta go now...



If you're heading for the concession stand, Miss Lina...

I'm afraid you're too late...



They've run out of snacks already. What you see here is the last of them. All they have left is some day-old popcorn. Sorry...



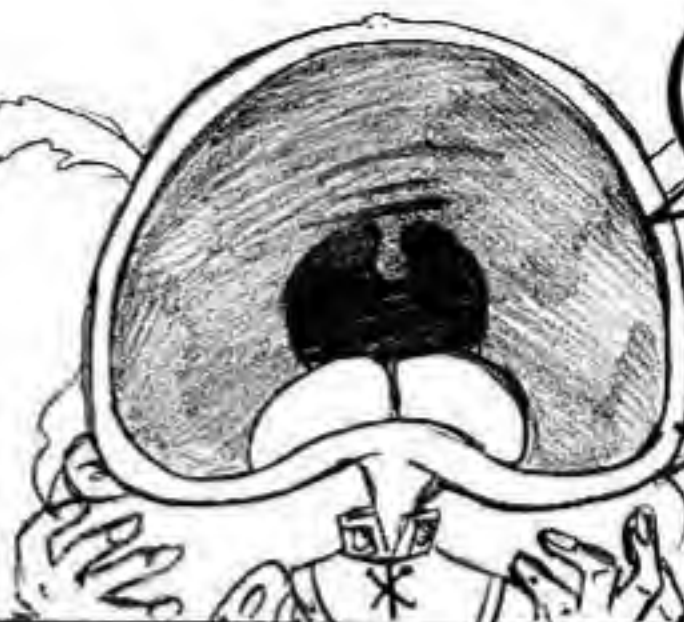
QUIVER



NOOOOOOOO!!!!

Oh, cruel fate! Why?

WHY?



\*Sniff\* I'm hungry... SOOO hungry. Why did this have to happen?

And HOW could this happen to someone as powerful and as beautiful as me?

\*Sniffle\*....

Just kidding...



They've got plenty of snacks left at the concession stand. Really...











Hey, what's that  
girl up to?

She must be crazy!

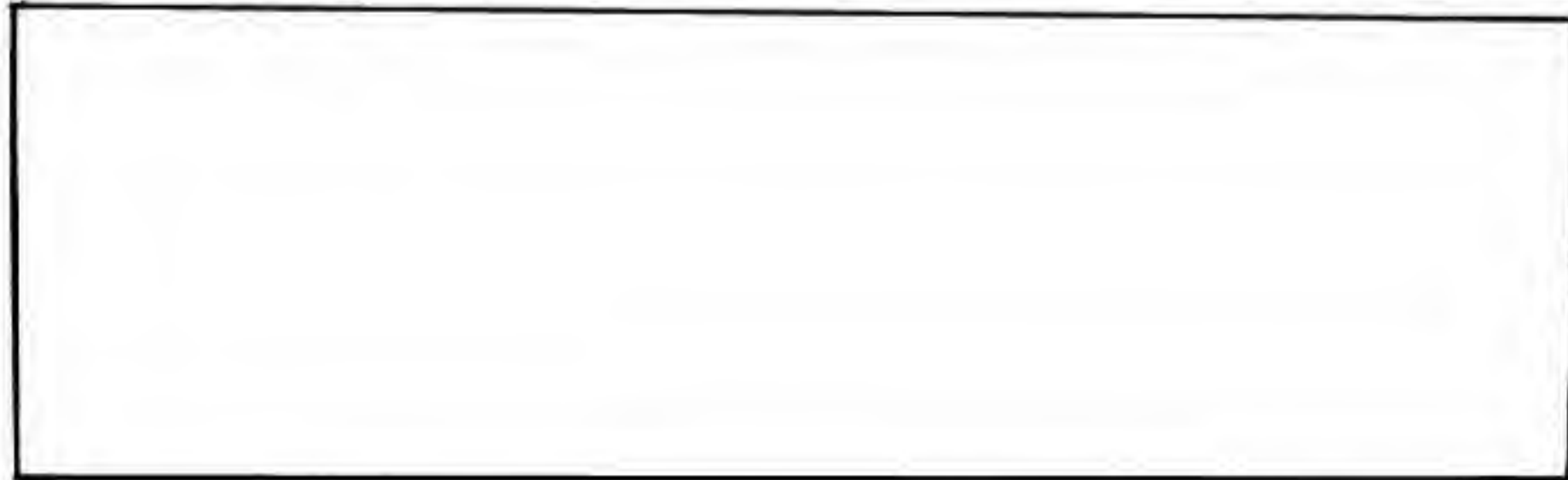
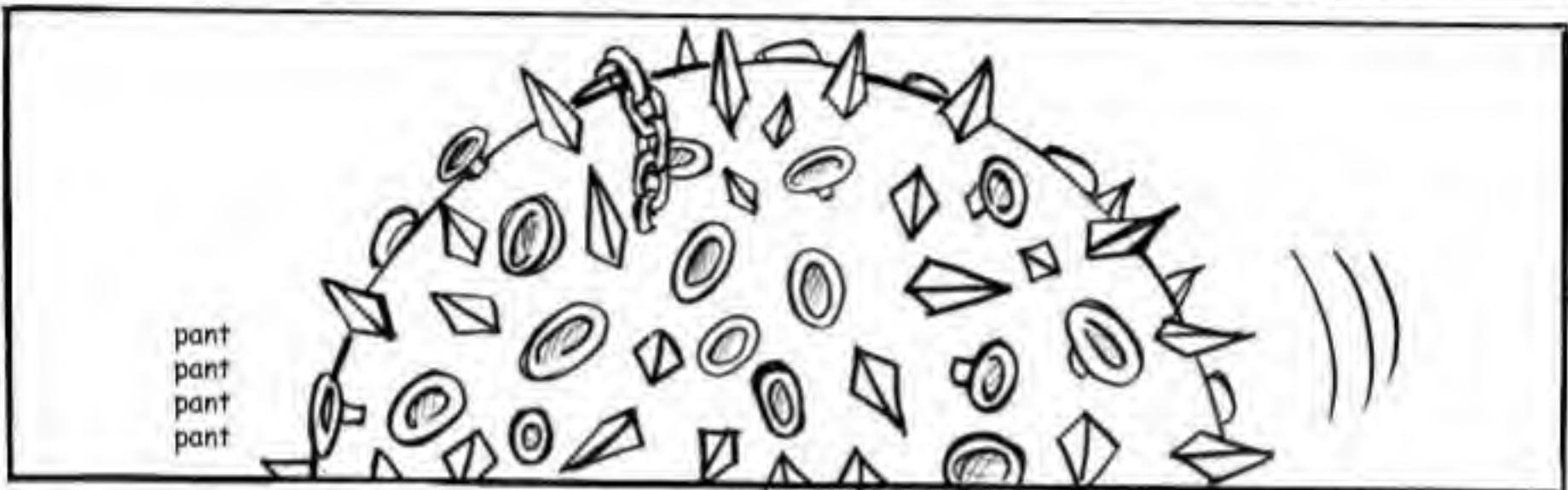
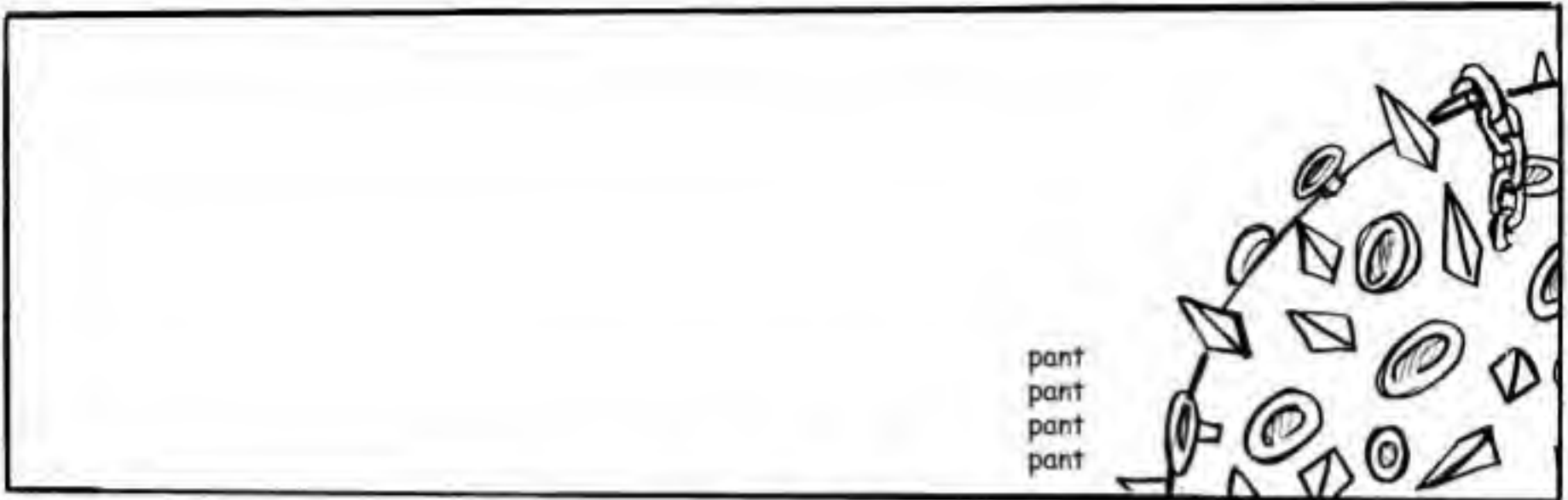
HEY !!

WATCH OUT!

AHHHHH !!!!

**R-R-R-R-R-I-I-I-I-P !!!!**





# KRASSSHHH



WIPE  
WIPE

Linaaa !  
Hey!  
LINAAA !!!



LINAAAAAAA !!



YIPE !!

LALA ! Oh,  
LAALAAAAAAA !!!



Where ARE  
you, my darling ?  
Where did you go ?  
I've got a nice pair of  
seats for us up in the  
balcony where it's dark  
and where we can be  
alone and do....  
ANYTHING we  
waaaaant !

I gotta find  
Lina somehow ! But if that  
Volun guy finds me  
first....

...I suppose I  
could do what any great  
warrior would do and fall  
on my sword...





Maybe I can get Lina's attention safely if I whisper really LOUD.



(\*Inhale\*) LIIIIIIINN--ah.



Just what do you think you're doing here, Jelly-Fish Brain? We have to get to the snack line! We only have a few minutes left!



Well, okay, but aren't we going to be doing at least ONE interview with the audience?



\*Sigh\*  
...FINE...



Excuse me, miss...



Hi! We're with the Seyruun Ministry of Culture. Might we have a word with you?



Oh, Miss Lina. Mr. Gourry...



Uh, you KNOW us, little girl?

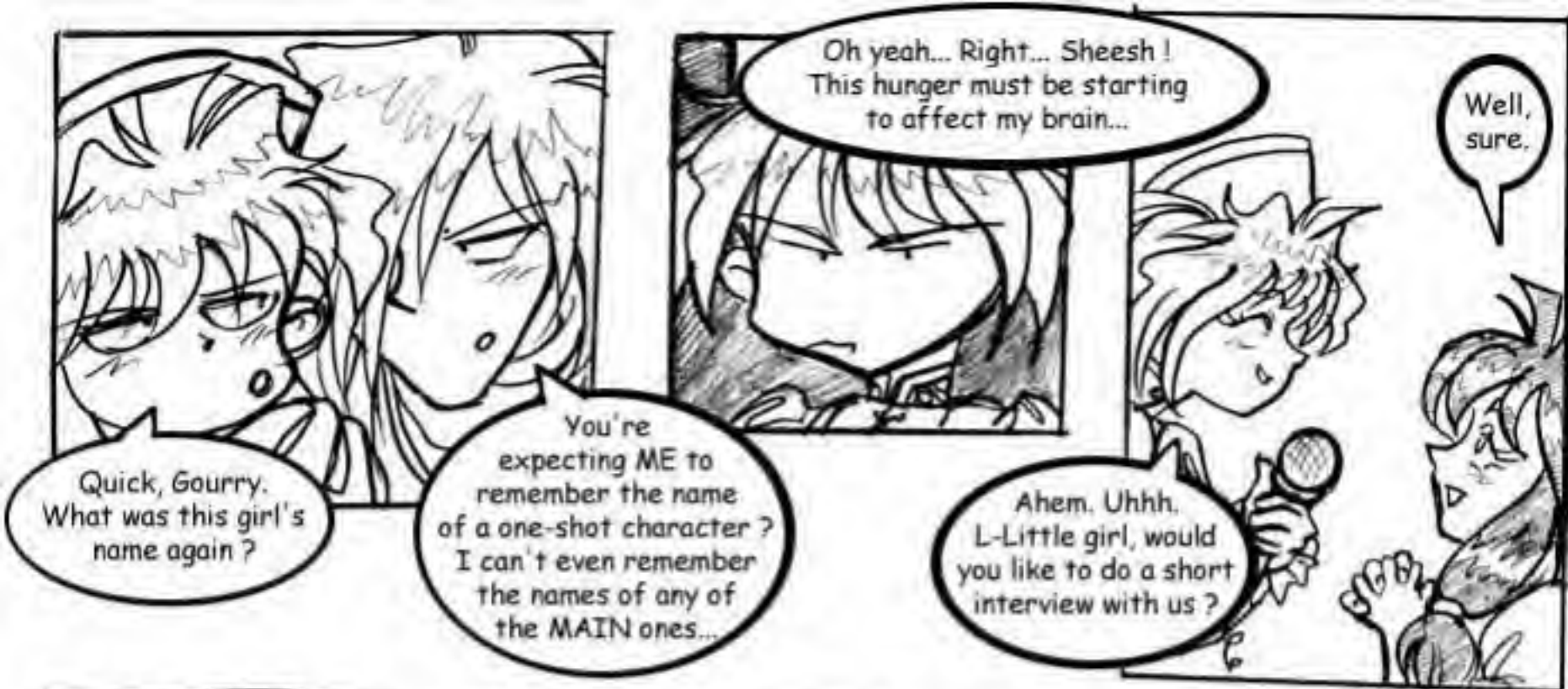


Oh, NOW I remember you! You were that girl with all the flowers who kept harping on about how a big hero was going to come and save your village...



Sure I do. I remember when you came to my village and helped me. You and that nice lady with the pretty tail...









Lina! It's one of those big, shiny ball-thingies! Only it's not hanging from the ceiling...



...And it isn't shiny...

\*Sigh\* Note to myself... There are many humans in this world who are capable of appreciating the subtlety and deadpan nature of Dragon Humor.  
  
Lina Inverse is NOT one of them...



Eep!

Come on, Gourry...

And it's TALKING...

Stay focused. Just a little further now...



Excuse us... Make way...



Extremely beautiful, powerful and hungry sorceress coming through...

Move it or lose it...

Hello ! We're with the  
Seyruun Ministry of Culture !  
We're here to do a special  
Intermission Interview Session  
with you good folks here at the  
concession stand....

Uwaaah!

...After which  
we'd like to  
order fifteen of  
everything you  
have in stock  
back there  
and a keg of  
root beer...

So then,  
why don't you  
tell us what  
you think of...

Ah.....ah.....AHHHHHHHHH !!!!





Lina! Whoa...  
I wonder what could've  
scared her so much that  
she'd run off like  
that...

!



Well? Can I  
help you already? Or  
are you just gonna stand  
there gaping at me?

You're Lina's  
sister Luna. What are  
YOU doing working here  
at the snack stand?

This is just  
another one of my part-time  
jobs. Hey, I gotta earn my scratch  
somehow. Being the "Knight of Ceipheid"  
may be cool, but the position don't come  
with a SALARY, you know...

Now that I think of it, being a warrior of light, (such as I am,) it probably wouldn't be right of me to let you and Lina walk away unpunished after watching the way you both just cut ahead in line. But I'll be willing to do so if you turn around and leave right now...

Well, thank you. That's very kind of you.

I'm going now...

Hold it.

\*GULPI\*

Here. Take these. One of them is for you and the other is for Lina.

POCKY !  
GEE ! THANKS !!

Well, I thought I couldn't have you walking away thinking I was a monster...

Wow ! Lina isn't going to believe me when I tell her you just gave these to us !

Hee hee. What a nice gal. I can't understand why Lina is always so afraid of her...

I'm NOT just giving them to you. I'm SELLING them to you.

And for the low, low price of only 3000 Gold Pieces. Payable immediately.

Ah-HA!  
NOW I understand why....



**Meanwhile, backstage,  
the cast meeting is  
drawing to a close...**



And what makes him think HE'S qualified to play the role of a tragic figure like Hamlet? When has he ever had any real-life experience dealing with tragedy?



After all, I used to be the president of the Ancient Dragons Drama Club. I know every one of Shakespeare's plays by heart. And here I am, getting cast as the "Grave-digger."

A lowly, class-less prull with barely any stage time...

Gee, I can't imagine why Zel didn't give you a better part... He must be jealous of your talent...

...or maybe he just has a thing against whiny, temperamental, hard-to-work-with actor types...

WHY DON'T YOU SHRIVEL UP AND DIE, YOU SMIRKING, RUBBER-FACED FRUITCAKE !!!!

Oh well. That's backstage politics for you... Some are winners and some are losers. But I should think you'd be USED to losing, eh, Val?

Why no, there isn't, Mr. Director. I can assure you that I am, at all times, maintaining a level of composure and professionalism that is the hallmark of a true actor.

Ahem. Valgarv? Is there a problem?

HEEEEEEE.....

Well that's good to hear. So. Why don't you go put on your costume now and get ready for your entrance?

Yes, sir. Thank you for reminding me. What ever would I do without you, Director Man?





Get off! Get off!  
Get OFF!!!!



\*Sigh\*  
Okay, Amelia,  
I want to talk  
to you about  
that scene coming  
up where Hamlet  
confronts Ophelia,--  
the "nunnery"  
scene...

Now it will be  
your most difficult  
scene, and I want to  
make sure you're  
completely comfort-  
able with how I  
staged it...

GET OFF !!!

KICK !!!



Oh yes,  
I'm fine with it.  
I know what I  
have to do...and what  
I have to let  
YOU do...

Yes, well... I  
just want to assure  
you that I'm going to  
go as easy on you as  
I possibly can...



I know  
you will. It'll  
be like the way  
you and I  
rehearsed it  
earlier...



Yes....  
well, I'm  
thinking of  
making a  
slight change  
in the scene by  
adding....a...  
kiss between  
Hamlet and  
Ophelia.



A....A....  
KISS ?

Now it's nothing  
to get excited about...

It's  
purely an  
artistic  
decision...





And it's something I had planned on doing all along, but I didn't want to tell you about it until now because I was unsure of how you would react...Or if you would be...overly excited--

EEEEEEK !!!!  
HENTAI !!!!

DAAHHH !!!!

Okay okay okay ! We won't do the kiss ! Forget I even mentioned it ! Please please PLEASE don't tell your father that I brought it up !!

No, Mr. Zeldadis... I'm perfectly alright with the idea of kissing you...

But I'm NOT perfectly alright with what Miss Lina is doing...

Miss Lina !  
GET OFF !!!

KICK !!

SHIVER

WHAM!!







Hmm. I must come up with a really creative and original way of annoying that woman before the night is over...

\*SIGH\*

Hmpf. They think they can humiliate me this way, do they?

Well, I'll show them all that it isn't wise to show disrespect to an Ancient Dragon!

And as for that so-called "director," I'll--

CRUNCH! CRUNCH!

CRUNCH!

MMMMM

CRACKLE !!

--soon...  
...show...  
...him--

Ahem. Excuse me. I am TRYING to have a dramatic interlude, and that's a terribly difficult thing to do with you crunching loudly and raining crumbs all over me.

Waff a dramaffic iferluff?

It's...  
Oh,  
Never mind...

Hmpf! Even the Brainless Boy Wonder gets a better part than I do...  
\*grumble\*

So...  
hungry...

GRUMBLE !!!

Whoa. That sounds like Lina's stomach...





Getting weak...  
Need food now...

Lina!  
Are you alright?

You're not food...  
Wait... Gourry?

Geez, I'm sorry I ran out on you and left you to face my sister alone... but you know how I get even at the SIGHT of her.

Yes, I know. (And I understand why now...) Anyway, she sold me some Pocky! I got a box for me and one for you!

Really?

Allright, Gourry! Way to come through for your best buddy! Let me have it!

Hm. This one's empty...

Let's see... Where did I put the other one?

Uh-oh. This one's empty too...



Uh-oh. I guess  
I was SO hungry. I  
accidentally ate  
BOTH boxes...



You... ate...  
MY...Pocky?



N-now,  
take it easy, Lina!  
There's no reason to  
get upset! All I did was  
eat a little Pocky! It  
wasn't like I did  
something seriously  
bad, I-I-like make a  
thoughtless comment  
about the size of  
your breasts!

EEEEEP !!



...which, by the  
way, seem much  
smaller than usual  
tonight. Did you  
strap them down to  
flatten them or  
anything?



At that precise moment,  
not far away...

Yes, Mr. Zelgadis.  
I'm all ready for the  
next scene...

So am I.  
\*giggle\*

Well, just to  
remind you, I will be  
getting a little rough with  
Amelia in this next scene,  
but I know you understand  
it's all for the sake  
of--

Yes, yes, I know.  
Go ahead and do whatever  
you think the scene demands.  
Amelia's a strong, courageous  
girl. (Why, I'm sure she's  
even looking forward to  
the next scene.)

Yes. \*Sigh\*  
My very first  
onstage kiss.

Kiss?

What's this  
about an onstage  
kiss?

YIPE!  
W-W-Well...  
I-It's.. An  
artistic decision  
of mine. Although  
Shakespeare himself  
never wrote it into  
the stage directions,  
it's common practice  
for directors to  
insert a kiss into  
the "hunnery"  
scene.

HEELLLLLPP !!!!

Huh?

..to imply the depth  
of the relationship between  
the two characters. This is  
something I planned on  
doing--







Mr. Director!  
When is Act Three going  
to start? The audience  
is getting restless!



Okay. It'll  
start as soon as  
things get cleaned  
up back here. We'll  
ask Rezo to cast  
his "time-reverse"  
spell again...

Anyone  
got a clue as to  
where he could  
be now?

I know  
where he is!  
I'll go get  
him!



SCOWL!



\*Sigh\* Oh gods..  
I wonder what OTHER  
problems could be  
looming over me right  
now...



Hmmm..  
Rezo's time-  
reversal spell...

Hmmm..

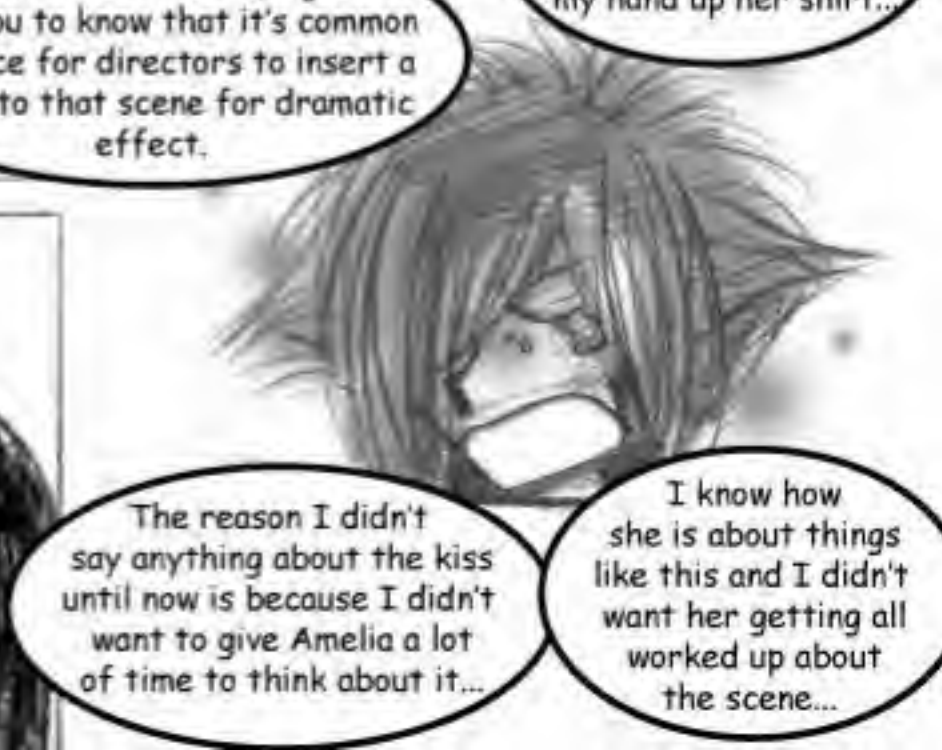
Ahem! \*coff!\* Well, I just  
want you to know that it's common  
practice for directors to insert a  
kiss into that scene for dramatic  
effect.

I mean, it's not  
like I'm going to be  
Ethan Hawke and stick  
my hand up her shirt...



Ah... Prince  
Phil!...Hi!

About that  
kiss with Amelia...



The reason I didn't  
say anything about the kiss  
until now is because I didn't  
want to give Amelia a lot  
of time to think about it...

I know how  
she is about things  
like this and I didn't  
want her getting all  
worked up about  
the scene...



Well, whatever happens, I know I'M not going to be nervous!

Hey, Mr. Director... Is that a blush I see under all that soot?



Allright, everyone! To your places! The curtain will be rising in a few minutes!

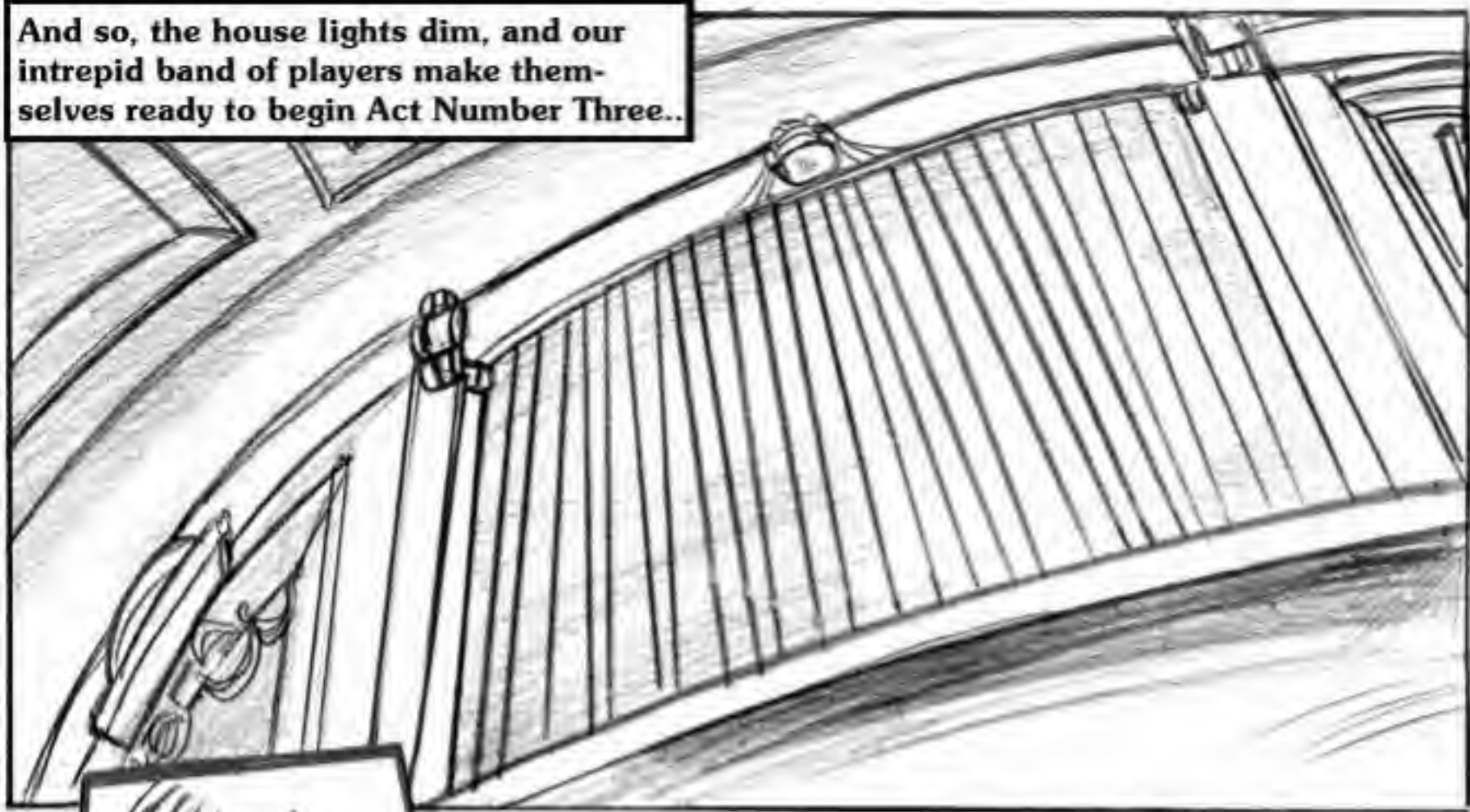
Bet that's not the ONLY thing that's going to be rising in a few minutes...

Oh, go and hoist yourself on your own petard, Horatio!





And so, the house lights dim, and our intrepid band of players make themselves ready to begin Act Number Three..



Well, thanks once again for your help, Rezo. I have to say that this ALMOST makes up for your turning me into a chimera...

Especially when I could've turned you into a troll or a newt, or some being incapable of reading and putting on a Shakespearean tragedy...

But just think, had I done so, none of us would be here right now...

Yeah, well, I find myself really starting to regret that decision now...



Psst! Rezo! When you've finished up here! Can I ask you to do something for me?

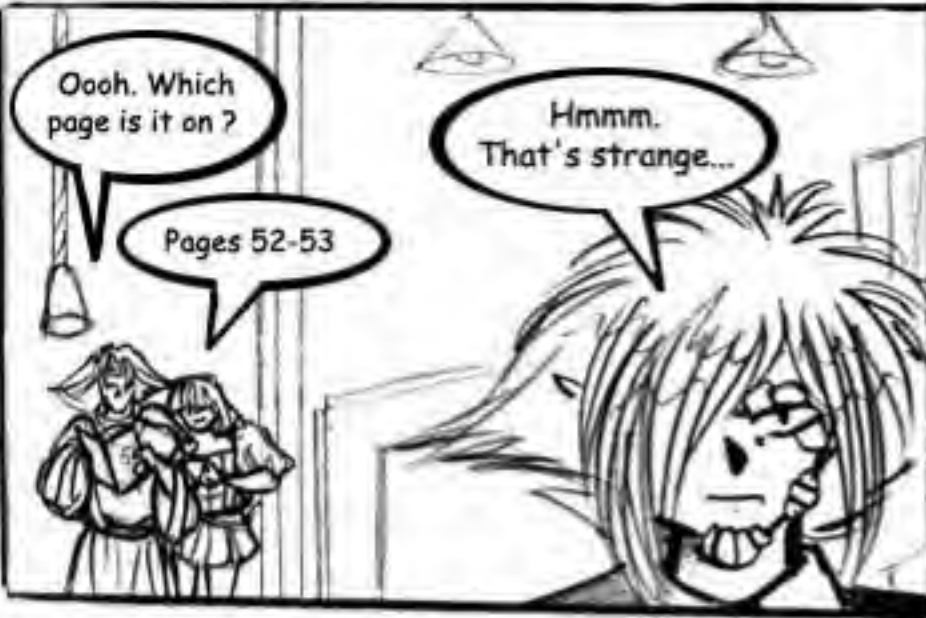
A little favor from one purple-haired, staff-slinging, squinty-eyed priest to another?

Oh my... That would REALLY be a tragedy...









**Next up:  
Act  
Three**

# Hamlet: The Manga

## Act III







Ahem. Ladies and gentlemen... Sorry for the delay. We now present you with Act Three of our drama...



They did this by arranging to have Hamlet's old school friends, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, visit with the prince, in the hopes that he would confide in them...



But Polonius, the king's advisor, has a plan. Believing Hamlet's madness to be a result of his love for his daughter, Ophelia...

He hits upon a way that  
he can use that love to get  
Hamlet to reveal his in-most  
thoughts to the lady...



...While he himself eavesdrops  
on the both of them from a  
nearby hiding place...



Ophelia, being the dutiful and  
obedient daughter, agrees to help  
her father out with his plan.  
Polonius guides his daughter to a  
place in the castle where Hamlet will  
be sure to find her and commands  
her to sit quietly while reading a  
book.

Then he gives her a set  
of instructions on what to do  
once the prince arrives...



...putting the words into  
her mouth, which she  
must say to him.



This being done,  
he takes his leave of her,  
and slips--



He takes his leave of  
her, and slips behind a  
nearby arras.





Where he will  
wait and observe  
the both of  
them--

--ahh...both of them--

uh...wait and....  
observe...uhhh... the  
both of....

SHOOOM

AHA! I  
KNEW YOU  
WERE HIDING HERE  
YOU MAZOKU SCU--

Huh?

Where IS that  
slimy little namagomi?  
Where'd he go?

I don't  
understand.  
I know he  
was here.  
I could  
SENSE him...

Oh gods.. It's  
FILIA'S turn to  
drive me insane  
now...



Allright, Rezo!  
Now's your chance!  
Cast the spell!

Ah... How far  
back did you want me  
to "time-reverse"  
Filia's brain?



ANY point  
in time BEFORE she  
started learning her  
lines. It doesn't  
matter when!

«About six  
months ago  
ought to do the  
trick. Make  
sure she  
forgets  
EVERY-  
THING!»

Xelloss...



Uh, Miss  
Filia... Is there  
something  
wrong?

So that's his  
game. To play hide  
and seek with me...

Well if that slimy  
trickster thinks I'm going  
to stand here and let him  
make a fool out of me, he's  
dead wrong!



Oh, I wouldn't  
be too sure about  
that, Filia...





Now try to stay calm, Miss Filia. It's never a good idea to lose control over one's emotions. As a great justice-loving philosopher once said...



Dammit, Rezo ! You MISSED her! What's the matter with you ? Are you bli--



--uhhhh... err...  
I mean... \*whoops\*...

\*Sigh\* Well...  
I guess there's nothing I can do now, except go back to my place...



What's going on ? Why am I dressed like this ? Is this some state occasion ?

I think you'd better. And quickly. Mr. Zelgadis doesn't look like he's very happy right now...







Gee, I wonder what I'm supposed to be doing back here...



This is strange... Like some kind of dream world... Could I be dreaming all this?

That would explain why I'm wearing my pajamas...



Hey... It's Mr. Zeligadis... But what is he doing dressed all in black?



I thought only villains dressed in black. This is most strange.




Good my lord, How does your Honor for this many a day?

I humbly thank you, well.




My lord, I have remembrances of yours--


--That I have longed long to redeliver. I pray you now receive them.




No, not I.  
I never gave  
you  
aught.




My honored  
lord, you know  
right well  
you did.




And with them  
words of so sweet breath  
composed as made the  
things more rich.



Their perfume lost,  
take these again, for to the  
noble mind rich gifts wax  
poor when givers prove  
unkind. There, my lord.



Ha, ha,  
are you  
honest?




My lord?


What means  
your lordship?

Are you fair?

That if you  
be honest and  
fair, your  
honesty should  
admit no  
discourse to  
your beauty.



This dream is  
getting WEIRD...  
What kind of a strange  
language are they  
talking to each other in?



All this talk  
about beauty... All this  
looking into each other's  
eyes... I wonder what  
it means...

Could beauty, my lord,  
have better commerce than  
with honesty?

It's like they're in love.  
But why would I be dreaming  
about that? Is this supposed  
to be a prophetic dream?



I did love  
you once.

Indeed, my lord,  
you made me  
believe so.

You should not have  
believed me, for virtue  
cannot so inoculate our  
old stock but we  
shall relish of it. I  
loved you not.

I was the  
more deceived.

Get thee to a  
nunnery. Why  
wouldst thou  
be a breeder  
of sinners? I  
am myself  
indifferent  
honest...

...but yet I could  
accuse me of such things that  
it were better my mother  
had not borne me.



What should such fellows as I  
do crawling between earth and heaven?  
We are arrant knaves all; believe  
none of us. Go thy ways to a  
nunnery!



Where's your father?

HER FATHER



This... dream is becoming more like a nightmare...

I'm starting to think it ISN'T a dream... And if it isn't, Mr. Zelgadis had better have a good explanation of why he's treating Amelia this way...

At home, my lord.



Let the doors be shut upon him--

--that he may play the fool nowhere but in 's own house!



If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry:

Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny.

Get thee to a nunnery, farewell.



O help him, you sweet heavens!

Or if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool, for wise men know well enough what fools you make of them.

To a nunnery, go, and quickly too. Farewell.







Heavenly powers,  
restore him !



I have heard of your  
paintings, too, well enough.  
God hath given you one  
face and you make your-  
selves another.

You jig and amble,  
and you lisp; you nickname  
God's creatures and make  
your wantonness your  
ignorance.

Go to, I'll  
no more on 't. It  
hath made me  
mad !

It hath  
made me  
MAD !!!



Okay,  
Amelia... This  
is where the  
kiss happens...  
You ready ?

Y-Yes....









\*sigh\*....



Gasp !

Hunh ?



Aiyyeeekkk....





**And just WHAT do  
you think you're  
doing, Mr.  
Zelgadis ?!!**

I-I-I'm doing  
wh-what we discussed...  
You know... What I had  
to do for this scene...  
You know... You said you  
were... okay with it...





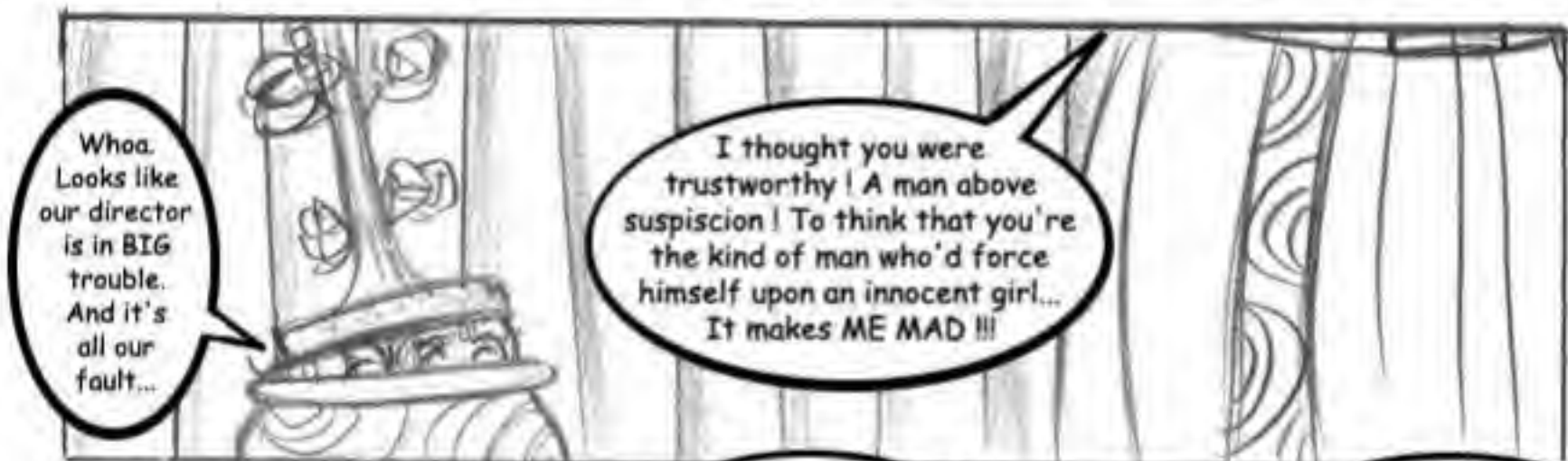


Dream or no, I can't just stand by and let something so UNJUST happen to my precious daughter! I know she makes you mad, Mr. Zelgadis! But that's no reason to abuse her!



Um.. Daddy? Please don't get upset...

I'm OKAY with what he's doing. Really!



Whoa. Looks like our director is in BIG trouble. And it's all our fault...

I thought you were trustworthy! A man above suspicion! To think that you're the kind of man who'd force himself upon an innocent girl... It makes ME MAD!!!



As the ones responsible for this situation, it is our solemn social duty to climb out of here and try to explain things to Phil...

Even though such an action would put us at risk of exposure and punishment...

But there's no getting around such action if we want to save Zelgadis...



"IF" being an operative term here...

Of course...

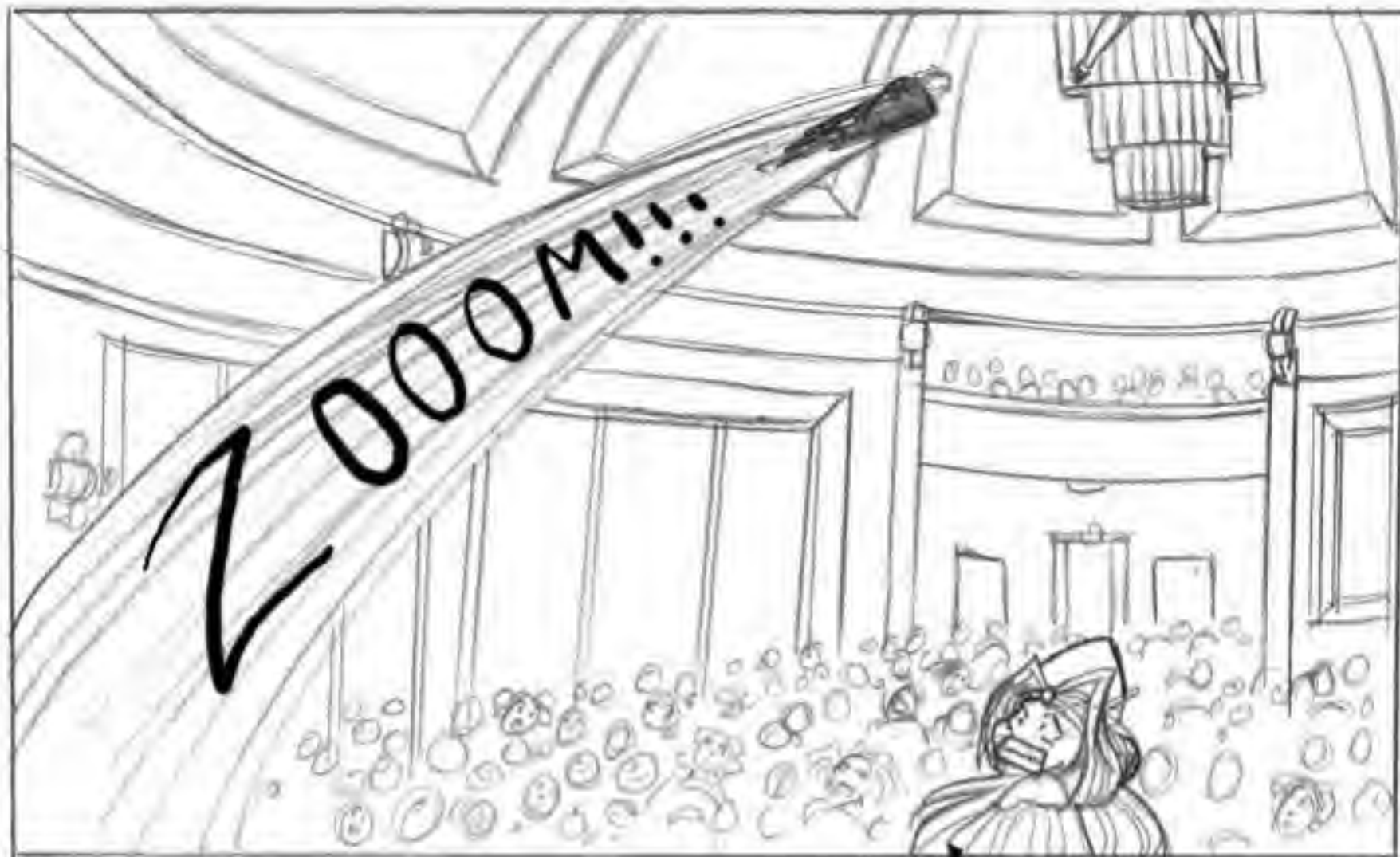
Now now,  
Phil. If you just  
calm down, we can  
discuss this issue in  
a rational manner.  
I'm sure you'll see  
that this is nothing  
but a simple mis--

**Pacifist--**

**CRUSSHH !!!!!**

**ZOOOMM!!**





Hufh ? \*snorfle\*



**GASP**

**YAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHH !!!**





Hm. This play has taken an unusual turn. I do not recall these events as being an integral part of the plot.

It's most likely some fanciful invention of the director's...



Not unlike that scene in the musical, "Phantom of the Opera," where the chandelier falls, then swings away from the audience at the last moment....



In other words, just a cheap, diversionary tactic to keep the audience from getting bored...(or more bored than it is already...)



I see...





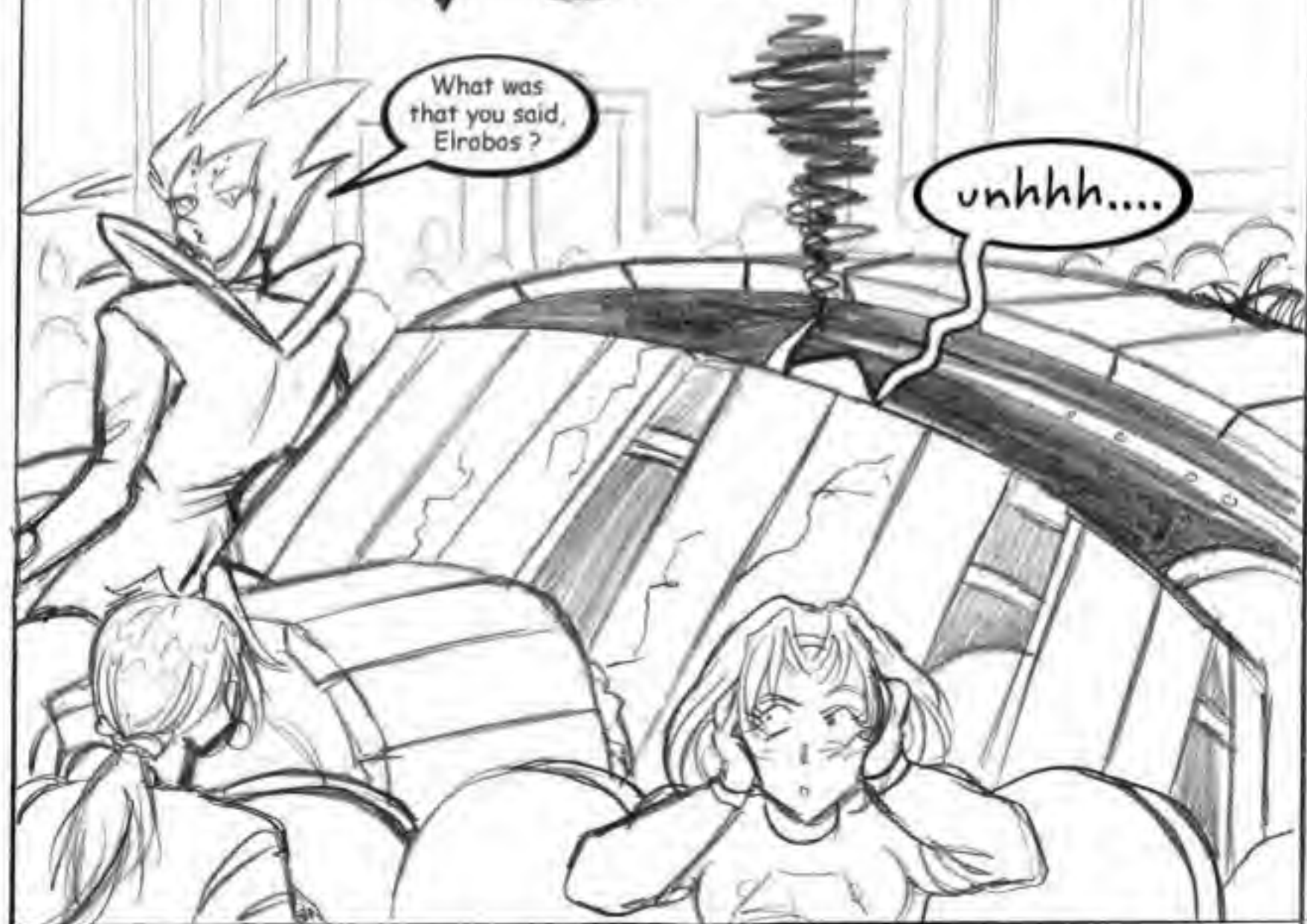
Almace has been gone a while... I had better go and see where he wandered off to...

Hurry back. You never know. Something exciting may be about to happen any minute now.

**CRASSSHH !!!**

What was that you said, Elrobos?

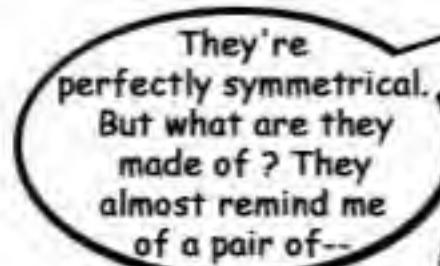
unhhh....





**Meanwhile...**



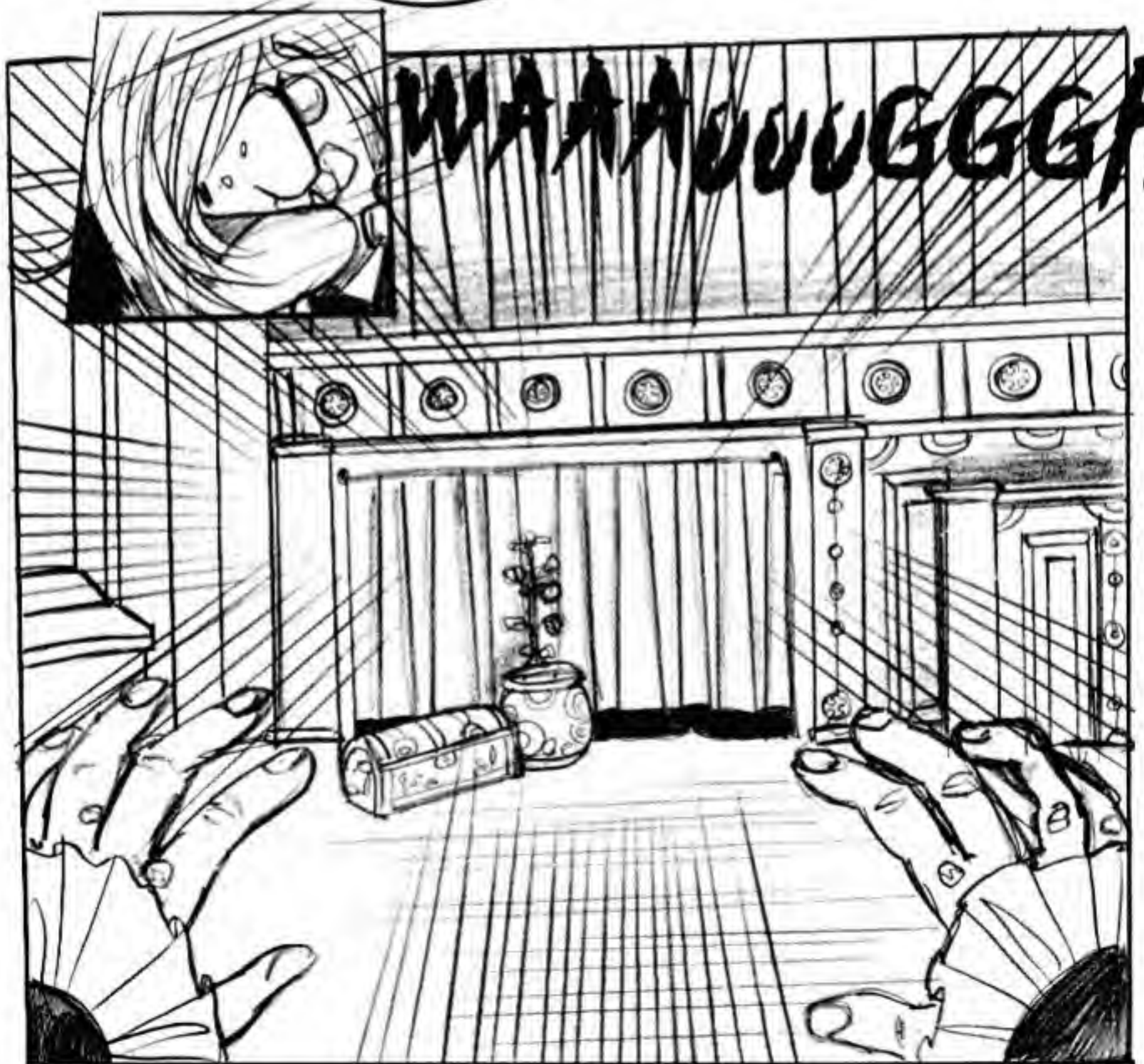




P....Pervert....









Uh-oh. Here comes our illustrious director. If we don't do something to help him **THIS** time, he's finished for sure.



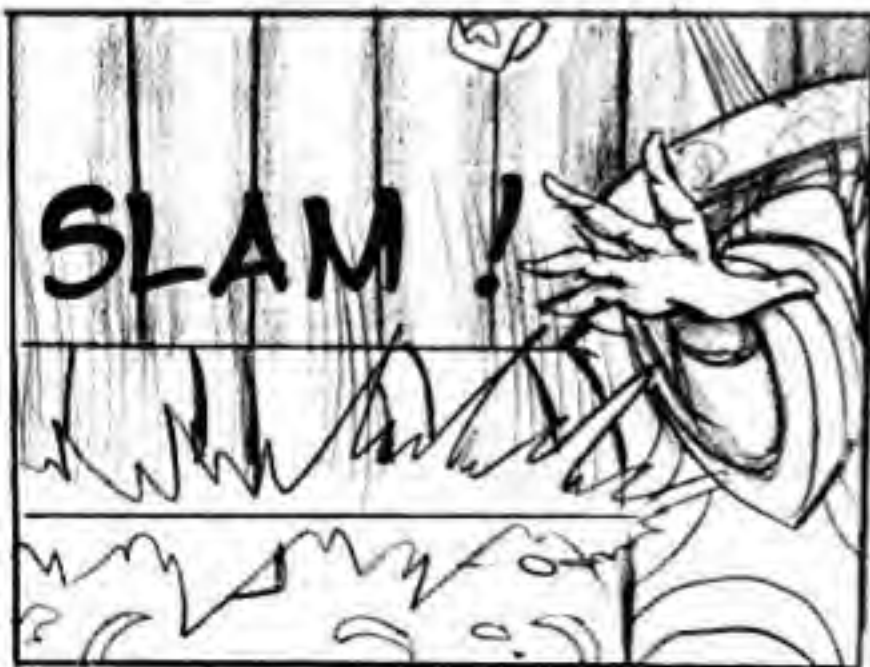
**WAAAAAHHHHHHHHHH**



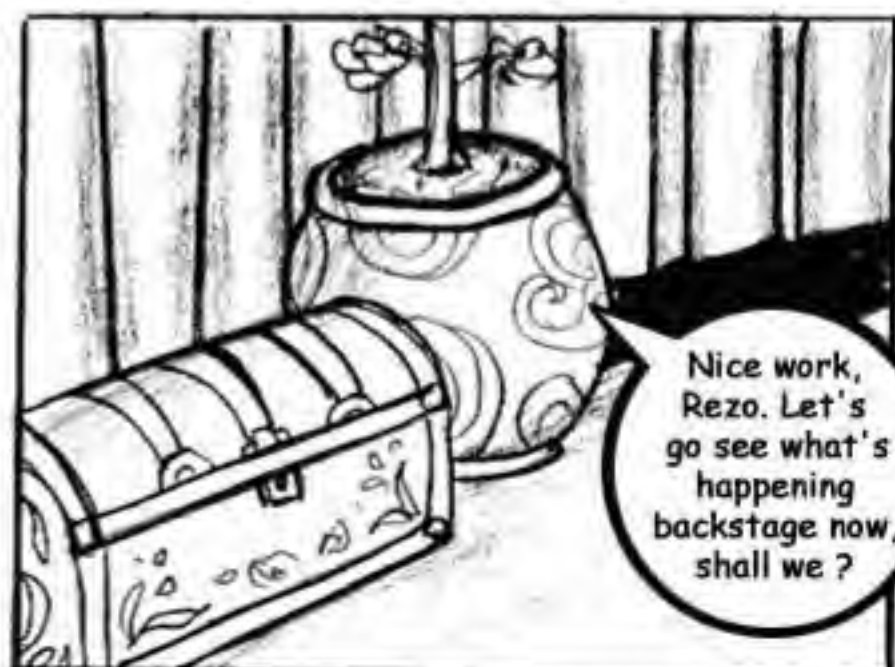
**FWIP !**



**THUNK !**



**SLAM !**



Nice work, Rezo. Let's go see what's happening backstage now, shall we ?



# Backstage...



Oh ye flippin' hairy gods. This is just what we need. So where's Zelgadis right now?

With him gone, I guess we'll just have to cancel the rest of the play and go home.

Hmm... Well... I guess we have to, don't we? If there's no Hamlet, there can't be any play of the same name...

He's vanished. Disappeared. A wise move considering all the lawsuits he's probably facing right now.

\*Sigh\* Time to get out of these crazy costumes and go get ourselves something to eat...

Wait! Everyone! We don't HAVE to cancel the play!

"The show must go on!" as they say, and it WILL go on!

With ME in the role of Prince Hamlet! I know all of the lines... And the Ancient Dragon Drama Club voted my Hamlet as the best interpretation of--

What the hell?---

Forget it, Valgarv. It's a wrap. It's over. Time to head home...





Yeah, yeah,  
we gotcha. We  
understand. Show  
must go on. Sacred  
tradition. Right.



Excellent, I  
shall go now to prepare  
for my role whilst you  
prepare the stage for  
the next scene: The  
famous "To Be or Not  
To Be" Speech...

IT IS NOT OVER! IT  
ISN'T OVER UNTIL I SAY  
IT'S OVER!! THE SHOW  
MUST GO ON! THAT'S  
THE SACRED THEATRE  
TRADITION! AND IT  
WILL GO ON!!



\*Sigh\*. Well, I tried to  
catch up with Prince Phil and  
Amelia but I lost them around  
a corner. What are we going to  
do? Without their characters,  
we can't finish the play...



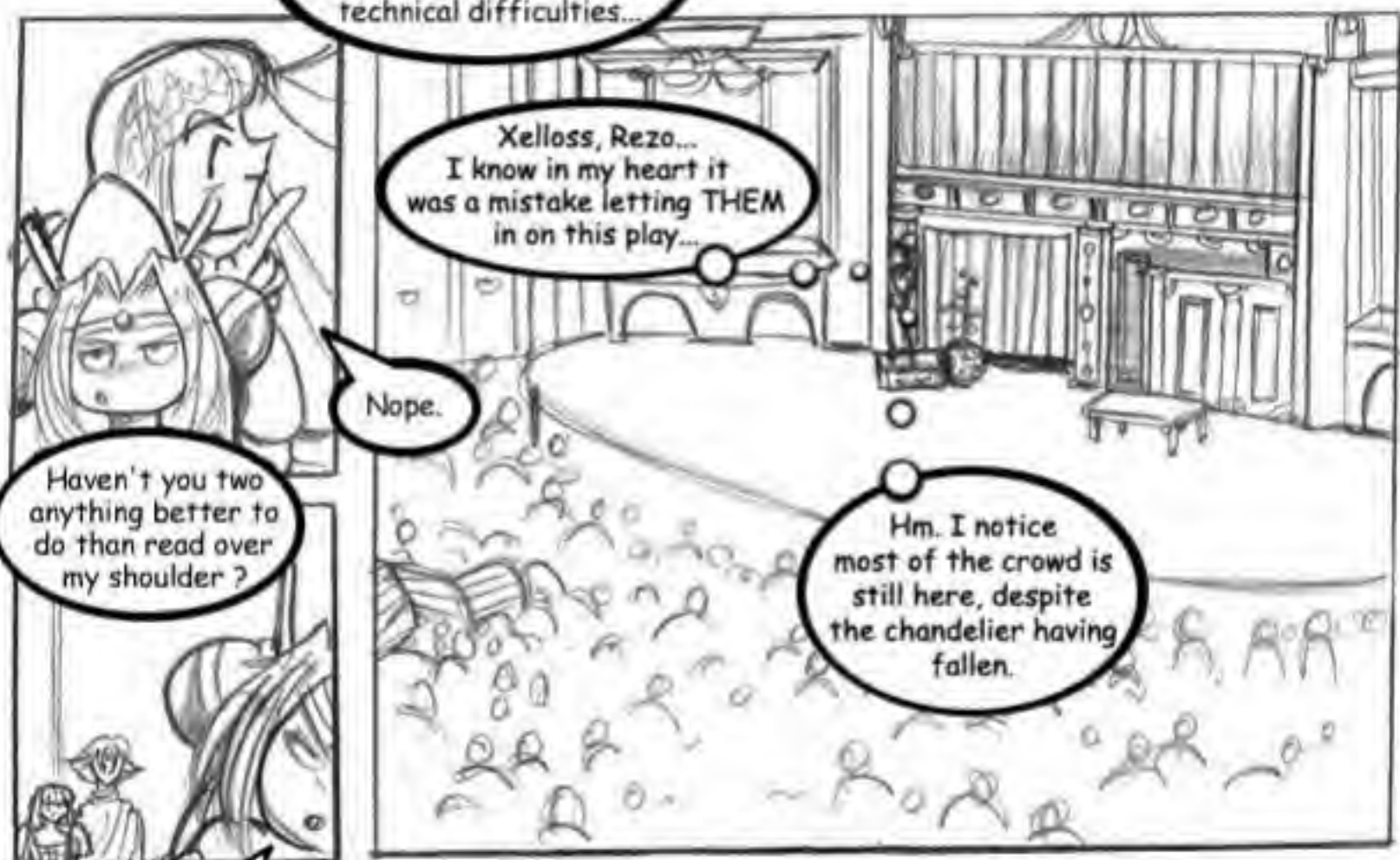
And yet,  
"The Show Will  
Go On..."



Okay... Doublet...  
Jerkin...Cloak...  
Tights...



Where in  
L-Sama's name  
is my  
CODPIECE?





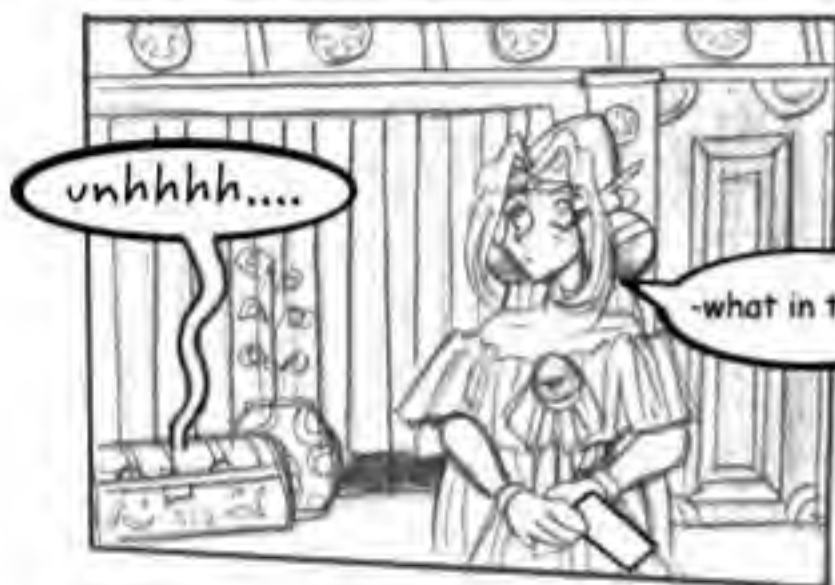


Well, \*SIGH\*...  
Let's get this over  
with...

Ladies and gentlemen.  
We apologize for tonight's  
unforeseen technical  
difficulties.



In the absence of  
our director and leading  
star, we would like to  
announce a substit-



unhhhh....

-what in the--?



uh..  
announce  
a  
substitut-  
ution...



The role of  
Hamlet will  
now be played by ...



FLASH!



?!

Uh... Valgarv  
the Ancient Dragon...



Our scene opens with Prince Hamlet, devastated by what he perceives to be the betrayal of the woman he loves, wandering the castle, contemplating the seeming hopelessness of life...



To be, or not to be...



...THAT is the question...

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune...



Or...

To take arms against a sea of troubles and by opposing, end them...



To die, to sleep--  
No more--and by a sleep  
to say we end the heartache  
and the thousand natural  
shocks that flesh is  
heir to...



...'Tis a consummation  
devoutly to be wished.

To die, to sleep---  
To sleep, perchance to dream...

Ay, **there's** the rub...

For in that sleep of  
death what dreams may  
come, when we have  
shuffled off this mortal  
coil must give us pause.

There's the respect that  
makes calamity of  
so long life.




For who would  
bear the whips  
and scorns of time,


Th' oppressor's  
wrong, the proud  
man's contumely,

The pangs of  
despised love,  
the law's delay...






The insolence  
of office, and the spurns  
that patient merit of  
th' unworthy takes,




When he himself  
might his quietus make  
with a bare bodkin?



Who would fardels  
bear, to grunt and sweat  
under a weary life,

But that the dread  
of something after death,



The undiscovered  
country from whose  
bourn no traveler  
returns, puzzles the  
will...







BRAVO !!      Hooray!      Way to go!      More !!!      Bravo!      Magnificent!  
 Yeah!      **ENCORE !!**      **YAAAAAYY !!!**



YAAAAAYY !!!

ENCORE !!


CLAP! CLAP! CLAP! CLAP!






**THUNK !**






What's happening? Why is Mr. Zeldadis fighting with Mr. Valgarv?




Amelia? What are YOU doing back here? I thought...




Oh, I finally got Daddy to listen to me.

So... How the hell are we supposed to end this stupid play NOW?


I was able to explain to him that this was all just a play.



Yep. And I sure was relieved to hear that Mr. Zeldadis was only PRETENDING to be a villain...




And yet, I'm a little disturbed about the fact that I suddenly forgot everything about this play...



Daddy says it was like his mind had been erased while he was on-stage...

Maybe it was some weird kind of stage fright.



Sounds like he could've had stage fright... Although I've never heard of stage fright striking so severely... ..and suspiciously...







I'd bet my black lace garter that mazoku scum had something to do with it...



Look! You are supposed to be doing what I tell you to!

HA! Besides Lord Gaav, MY MUSE is the only one I'll serve!



And right now, my muse is telling me I should kick your ass and take over this little production of yours!



Ha! You'll get my director's megaphone only when you pry my cold, dead, stony fingers off of it!!



Hm. Methinks this situation is in need of some mediation. I'll talk to these boys and try to get them to resolve their differences...



GRRRRRRR



?!!



DAAHH !!!

Gentlemen, I beseech you to stop this pointless arguing...

Don't you realize that it is only through REASON, and not through violent confrontation that you can hope to---



Uh, I-I agree, Phil...

I'm certainly inclined to be reasonable at a time like this. I'm also inclined to turn invisible, if such a thing is possible...



Well, well... Using me as a human shield, eh? That doesn't sound like behavior much in keeping with that of a heroic figure like Hamlet...

I am NOT using you as a shield, Valgarv! (I have a much BETTER idea...)



PUT ME DOWN, YOU STONE-FACED FREAK !!!

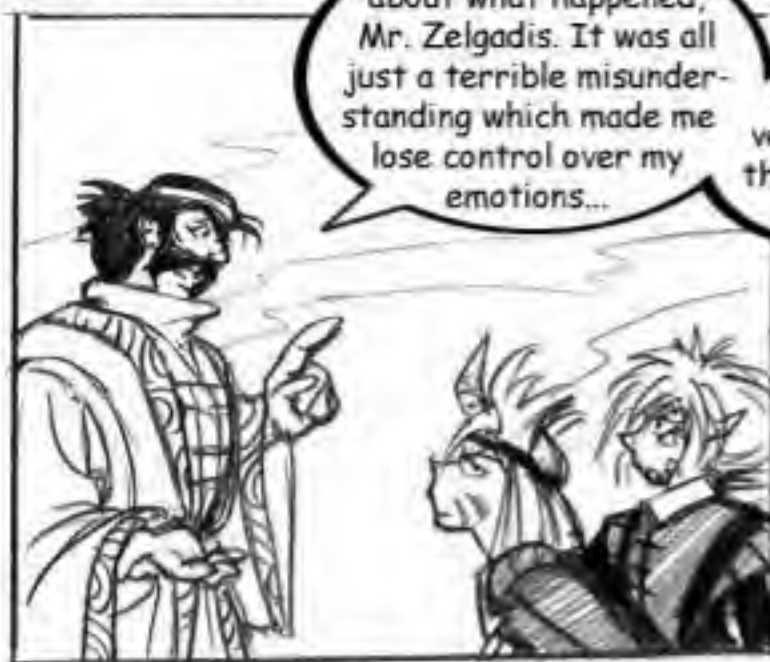
Oh THAT'S IT!  
I am SO grinding you into a fine powder after this...







Meanwhile...



I'm sorry about what happened, Mr. Zelgadis. It was all just a terrible misunderstanding which made me lose control over my emotions...

It was a very unjust thing for me to do...



Quite. Well then.... I take it you're not going to try and Pacifist Crush me out of existence again...



Certainly not! And I hereby declare from this moment on, that this production will be free of senseless violence!



Huh?





Hm. It would seem that I would up having to use you as a shield after all...

I sure hope that doesn't upset you too much, Valgarv...

I like mittens...

AUUGGHH !!!

My poor baby !!  
Filia-  
mama's  
SORRY !!!

WAAAHHHH

Xelloss... You planned this to happen. You deliberately acted to bring about this series of events, didn't you?...  
DIDN'T YOU ?

Thanks.

Don't mention it,  
.....luv.....



SOCK!!!



Alright  
everyone! Let's  
clear the  
stage!!!



Let's get  
everything we need  
for the next scene  
moved out here,  
pronto!



And so, it would appear  
that we have our play  
back on track once again...



**But what  
NEW trials and  
tribulations will  
await our intrepid  
cast in the  
scenes to come?**

**Will Zeldadis  
ultimately prove  
successful in  
realizing his  
creative vision?**

**And what of  
the REST of our  
band of  
merry  
performers?**

**What  
sort of  
problems  
will  
THEY  
have to--**



HEY!  
Narrator Guy!  
How about picking  
up the pace a little?  
Some of us haven't  
got all year to be  
IN this play,  
y'know!!





Uhm... er...  
Ahem....

And so, preparations  
are quickly made  
for the next scene...



Which will  
feature one of the  
most pivotal  
moments in  
the play...



The "play-within-  
a-play" scene in  
which Hamlet  
discovers the  
true nature of...



...of...uhm...  
the true....uhhh...

POP!



GLUG  
GLUG  
GLUG



Ahhhhhhhhh...



Huh?



Oh...  
Hi thereeee....  
Nice to see  
you all....



This is Naga  
the White Serpent...  
Still here... Still  
watching and  
reporting on this  
whole....play  
thingie....





I'll update  
you on the  
progress of  
the play so far,  
but first, I'd  
like to thank a  
few groups  
who made it  
here tonight...



Among them,  
the Atlas City  
Bass Rackets  
...uhm... Ass  
Brackets....  
Brass Rackets  
Society...



And the  
Femin--Fem...  
Feminism---  
\*Hic\*  
Fascist  
Feminists...



Unnhhhh.....



THUD !



Well ?  
What are you  
waiting for ?  
Go on...



Ahem. We will  
now continue to  
the next scene  
in Hamlet...



In which our hero discovers a vital clue  
to the mystery of his father's untimely  
death. Knowing full well that this is one  
of the play's most important scenes, Zelgadis  
is determined to make certain it comes  
off without a single hitch...

Psst !  
Psst !  
HEY !  
Rezo !!!



**As the stage is quickly and quietly prepared for the next scene, the players find themselves filled with a sense of excitement and anxiety. None more so than--**



HEY! WOULD YOU MIND TAKING IT ELSEWHERE? THE NARRATOR AND I ARE TRYING TO GET THIS PLAY BACK ON TRACK !!!  
\*SHEESH\*



Come... This way... Away from the Princess of Perpetual PMS...

I've got a business proposition for you ...

Hmm?



**WELL ? WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR ?  
KEEP GOING !!**



**Ahem... None more so than the chimeric genius who helped bring all of this about... Will his attempt to pull off this tragedy ultimately result in triumph ? Or will it be a tragedy unto itself ?....**



...And where preparations for the next scene have nearly been completed...

Okay.  
Looks good,  
Vrumugen...

Allright ! Curtain  
goes up in thirty seconds !  
We need all the actors who  
are going to be in the next  
scene out here, pronto !

Well well,  
at long last...

Didn't think  
we'd get the chance  
to take the stage  
again...

But now that we are,  
we're finally gonna show  
everyone what great acting is  
really all about ! Right,  
Martina ?

Uh... Martina ?  
Martina ! WHERE  
ARE YOU ?!!

Oh Garrrvieeee...  
Where ARE youuu ?  
(You horrid little pile  
of ash, you...)

I've got a  
little something  
for you...

..Just a little  
token of my  
affection...

Where are you  
hiding ? You big,  
SCARY monster...





I wouldn't sprain my brain trying to figure it out if I were you...



Instead, why don't you tell me what's in the bucket? Is that for me?



THIS? Um... n-no.... I-I-It's... um...it's....



...Water I'm using to mop the floor with...

I thought I'd do a little spring cleaning back here backstage in between scenes...

La la la la....



See? The floor's all nice and spotless now... Hee hee...

?!

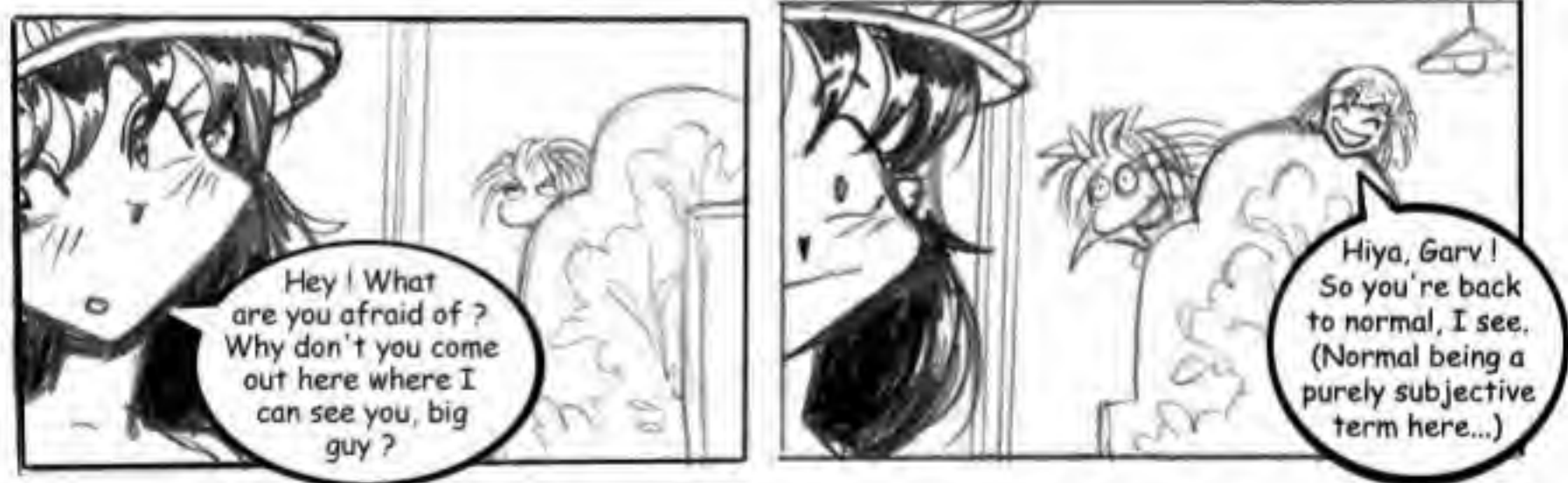
Yeah. Too bad it ain't gonna STAY that way for long...



Hiyeeee....









So, you've got your body back already. My, THAT was a quick bit of regeneration...



Well, shortpants, what can I say? I'm a fast healer...

Gee, Garv. Your fast recovery wouldn't have anything to do with your making a deal with Rezo to have him use his "time-reverse" spell to bring your body back to a point BEFORE it got fried, now would it?



How the hell did YOU know about that?

From Rezo. I just bumped into him a couple minutes ago and he told me all about the deal you made to get your body back to normal...



REZO?! You made a DEAL with him? What could a big hairy lummoX like YOU have that would be of any interest to a man like Rezo?



Hey, Garv! Thanks again for the hair spray! This lot here ought to last me at LEAST a week...

Ah... I see... Of course...







If Xellos or anyone else ever sees me like this, I just know they would never let me



...live....it...  
...down....



SIGH

\*SNOOKIEEEE...\*



Did -um's hurt your head? Did Filia-mama kiss it and make it better?



Ladies and gentlemen. Without further ado, we present the next scene in our play...

...In which the dramatic performance which Hamlet had earlier arranged to be played before the court is finally about to take place...

World... Please end now....





Said performance is, of course, if you'll remember, a tool by which Hamlet hopes to determine the guilt or innocence of his Uncle Claudius, who may or may not have caused the murder of Hamlet's father.



How will Claudius react when he sees a re-enactment of his own alleged crime staged before his eyes?

By the time the night's festivities have ended, Hamlet hopes he will have found an answer to that question...



Before the play begins, he pulls his best friend, Horatio aside for a little chat...

Horatio. The play tonight before the King...

One scene of it comes near the circumstance which I have told thee of my father's death.

I prithee, when thou seest that act afoot, observe my uncle...





If his  
occulted guilt  
do not itself  
unkennel in one  
speech, it is a  
damned ghost that  
we have seen...

...And my  
imaginations  
are as foul  
as Vulcan's  
stithy.



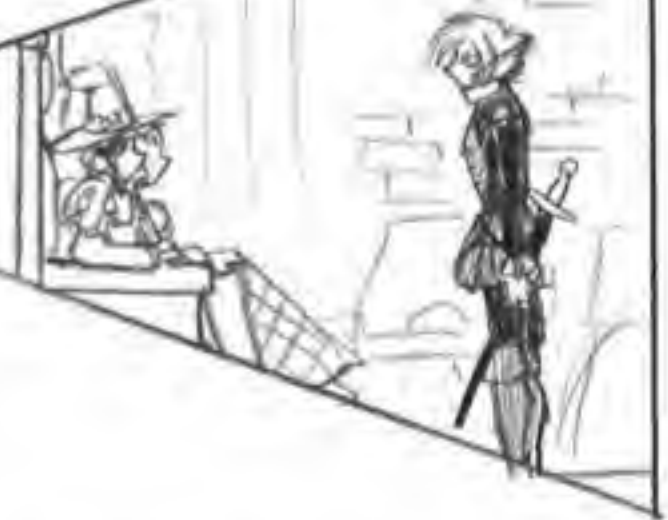
Give him  
heedful note, for I  
mine eyes will rivet  
to his face...



And after, we will both  
our judgments join  
in censure of his seeming.



Hamlet takes  
his leave of Horatio and  
heads towards his seat,  
stopping first to pay  
respect to his uncle,  
the king.



How fares  
our cousin  
Hamlet?

Excellent, i' faith,  
of the chameleon's  
dish.

I eat the air,  
promised-crammed.  
You cannot feed  
capons so.



Come hither,  
my dear Hamlet,  
sit by me.





No, good mother...



Here's metal more attractive.

Hamlet takes a seat next to Ophelia. It has been days since the two have been in each other's presence. Ophelia can still feel the harsh, angry words of Hamlet's scolding stinging her ears.



Hamlet, for his part, feels sorry for what he has put Ophelia through, but he also knows that she had played an active role in her father Polonius', attempts to spy on him...



Even if she were only doing her duty, even if she hadn't meant him any harm, she had still tried to deceive him...

It hurt Hamlet to see deception in the heart of someone he so loved...Someone he **STILL** loved...



It hurt Hamlet even more, knowing that he could not confide his plans to her, not yet. And that he would have to keep on playing the madman, no matter how much it might hurt her...







HRRRMMM

Eh-huurmm..

You are  
merry, my  
lord...

Hunh?...  
Oh..  
Who, I?



Ay, my  
lord.

O God,  
your only  
jig-maker.

What  
should a  
man do but  
be merry?



For look  
you how  
cheerfully  
my mother  
looks...

... and  
my  
father died  
within's  
two--

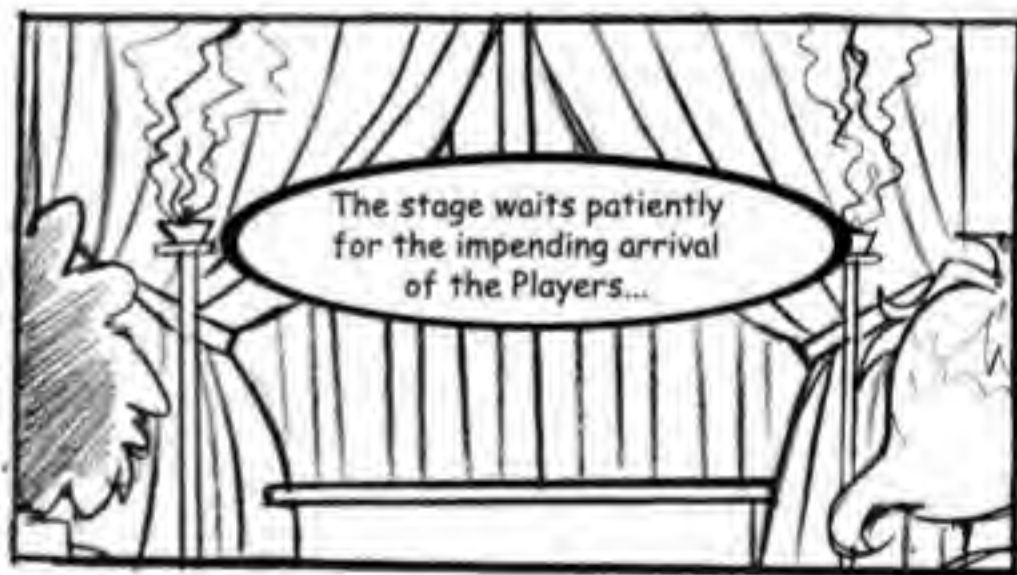
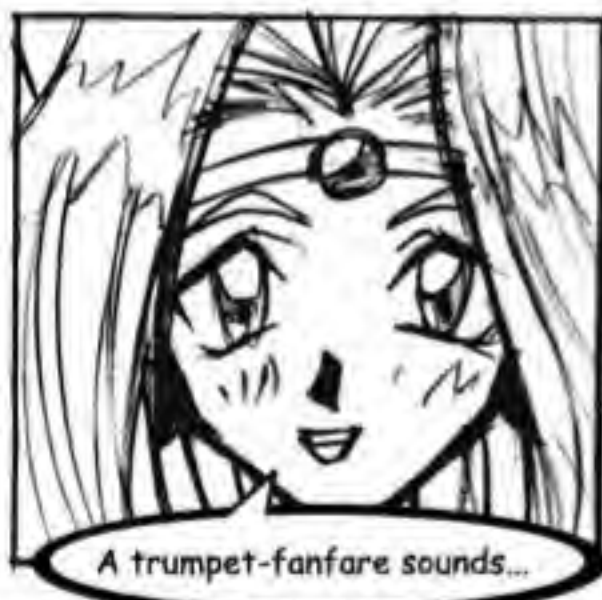
AHHH !!!



\*GULP\*

ERREMMM







BWAAAAATT!!!

FWIT !!

*For us and  
for our tragedy,  
here stooping to  
your clemency...*

*We beg  
your bearing  
patiently.*

*Is this a  
prologue or the  
posy of a ring?*

*'Tis  
brief, my  
lord.*

*As woman's  
love.*

*Full thirty times  
bath Phoebus' cart  
gone round.*

*Neptune's salt  
wash and Tellus'  
orbed ground,*

*Since love our hearts  
and hymen did our bands*

*Unite commutual in  
most sacred bands.*



*So many journeys may the sun and moon  
make us again count o'er ere love be done !  
But woe is me ! You are so sick of late,  
so far from cheer and from your former state,  
that I distrust you. Yet though I distrust,  
discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must.*

*For women fear too much,  
even as they love,  
And women's fear and love hold  
quantity, in neither aught,  
or in extremity.*

*Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too.  
My operant powers their function leave to do.  
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,  
honored, beloved; and haply as one kind...*



*For husband  
shalt thou--*

*O confound the rest !  
Such love must needs be  
treason in my breast!*



*In second husband  
let me be accurst.  
None wed the second  
but who killed  
the first...*

That's wormwood !

*The instances that  
second marriage move  
are base respects of thrift,  
but none of love.*

*A second time I kill my  
husband dead  
When second husband  
kisses me in bed.*

My God... I just  
realized something...

They're... actually...  
remembering their  
lines !

Could this mean that  
the streak of misfortune  
which has long been  
plaguing this production is  
at last OVER ?

Y'know, director man.  
I couldn't help but notice  
this play is getting a tad  
boring...

I mean, not only am I  
IN a crappy play, I'm in a  
crappy play where I have to  
watch a bunch of other people  
performing ANOTHER  
crappy play...

FSHHHK !!

Would you just  
go back to your  
seat, please ?

I promise you,  
once the mayhem  
and gore start  
flowing...

So I was thinking, maybe I  
could help liven things up a bit ...

...by perhaps throwing  
in a bunch of unscheduled,  
audience-pleasing mayhem  
and gore ? Hmm ?

...there WILL be  
plenty of it !

Yes... Yes,  
there WILL be...

\*SIGH\*

*So think thou wilt  
no second husband wed,  
but die thy thoughts when  
thy first lord is dead.*

*Both here and hence  
pursue me lasting strife!  
If, once a widow,  
ever I be wife!*

*'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave  
me here awhile. My spirits grow dull  
and fain I would beguile the  
tedious day with sleep.*

**SNAP!**

STEP STEP STEP STEP


Thanks for  
re-hiring us,  
boss...

Zzzzzz

**TUP!**


**WHOOOMP!!**






Sleep rock  
thy brain...


And never come  
mischance between  
us twain.



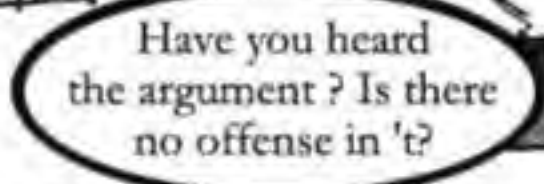
Madam, how  
like you this  
play?




O, but  
she'll keep  
her word.




The lady  
doth protest  
too much,  
methinks.



Have you heard  
the argument? Is there  
no offense in 't?




No, no, they  
do but jest, poison  
in jest. No offense  
i' th' world.




The  
"Mousetrap."  
Marry, how?  
Tropically.


What do you  
call the play?



The play is  
the image of a  
murder done in  
Vienna. Gonzago is  
the duke's name,  
his wife  
Baptista.



This is  
one  
Lucianus,  
nephew  
to the  
king.



'Tis a knavish  
piece of work, but  
what of that?

Your Majesty and  
we that have free souls,  
it touches us not.



Begin,  
murderer. Pox,  
leave thy damn-  
able faces and  
begin!



Come, the  
croaking raven  
doth bellow  
for revenge.



*Thoughts black,  
hands apt,  
drugs fit,  
and time  
agreeing.*



*Confederate season,  
else no creature  
seeing.*

*Thou mixture rank,  
of midnight weeds  
collected,*

*With Hecate's  
ban thrice  
blasted,  
thrice infected.*

*Thy natural  
magic and dire  
property  
On wholesome life  
usurp immediately.*



?!



GACK!



THUD!



He poisons him i' th'  
garden for his estate...







His name's Gonzago. The story is extant and written in very choice Italian.

You shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.



Lights !

King Claudius makes a hasty exit, followed by his concerned wife and the rest of his court, save Hamlet and Horatio.



It would appear as if the question of whether or not the ghost of Hamlet's father had been telling the truth about his murder, has at last been answered...

*Why, let the stricken deer go weep,  
The hart ungalled play.*



*For some must watch,  
while some must sleep:  
Thus runs the world away.*





Very well,  
my lord.

O good  
Horatio,  
I'll take the  
ghost's word  
for a thousand  
pound. Didst  
perceive?



Upon the talk  
of the poisoning?

I did very  
well note  
him.



Tis now the very  
witching time  
of night,  
When churchyards  
yawn and hell itself  
breathes out  
contagion to  
this world:

...now could I drink  
hot blood, and do such  
bitter business as  
the day would  
quake to look on.



And so, Hamlet,  
now certain of  
his uncle's  
guilt,  
sets himself  
upon the  
path of  
bringing his  
uncle to  
justice.

A path, no doubt  
fraught with danger, as  
well Hamlet knows...



Grrrkk....  
Hellp....

PULL!!

\* GRUNT \*

Okay. Maybe  
I AM getting too  
old for this...



**ONE  
UNCHARACTERISTICALLY  
UNEVENTFUL  
SCENE CHANGE  
LATER...**

And so, Hamlet now has what he believes to be irrefutable proof of his Uncle Claudius' guilt... All that remains now is for him to act...

However, it does not appear as if Claudius is going to sit idly by and wait for him to do so...

I like him not... Nor stands it safe with us to let his madness range...



Therefore, prepare you.  
I your commission will  
forthwith dispatch,

And he to England  
shall along with you.  
The terms of our estate  
may not endure  
hazard so near's as doth  
hourly grow out of  
his brows.



We will ourselves provide...



Most holy and  
religious fear it is to  
keep those many bodies  
safe that live and feed  
upon your Maj—



We will  
haste us !!!









O, my offense is rank, it smells to heaven;  
It hath the primal eldest curse upon 't,  
A brother's murder. Pray can I not,  
though inclination be as sharp as will.  
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent.



What if this cursed hand  
were thicker than itself with brother's blood?  
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens  
to wash it white as snow?

But O, what form of prayer  
can serve my turn?  
"Forgive me my foul murder?"



That cannot be,  
since I am still  
possessed of those  
effects for which  
I did the murder:  
My crown, mine own  
ambition, and  
my queen.

Help, angels!  
Make assay.




At that moment, Hamlet  
walks by and notices the  
king alone, apparently  
deep in concentration.

Bow, stubborn  
knees and heart with  
strings of steel  
be soft as sinews  
of the newborn babe.  
All may be well.

Now might I do it pat,  
now he is a-praying...






And now...

I'll do 't...

XSSAHK!



He took my father grossly,  
full of bread, with all his  
crimes broad blown, as  
flush as May.

And am I then  
revenged to take him  
in the purging of his soul,  
when he is fit and  
seasoned for his  
passage ?

And so he  
goes to heaven,  
and so am I  
revenged. That  
would be  
scanned.



No.





When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage, or in--



Oh COME ON, now!



Just hurry up and kill him already! What's the hold up?



I've been waiting three whole acts to see some decent bloodshed, and when I FINALLY think I'm going to see a principal character get his head lopped off, the hero pulls back at the last second because of some damn-freakin' philosophical loophole!



I mean, this "Hamlet" guy, it's like, he's a total puss!

It's like he can't make up his damn mind about anything! He couldn't even bring himself to believe what his own father had said about Claudius even though it was TOTALLY obvious the guy was a scumball!

Why can't Hamlet just KILL the guy and take over the kingdom? Why does he always have to DEBATE everything? Geez!



\*Sigh\*...

Polonius hopes that Hamlet still has enough trust in his mother to confide in her...

Little does he know of the tragic and bloody events which are about to take place...

Whoa. That WAS a smooth segaway...

EXCUSE ME, gentlemen...

SKOOCH  
SKOOCH  
SKOOCH  
SKOOCH

"Tragic and bloody events", eh? So after 3 acts and 226-1/2 manga pages, things **FINALLY** start getting good.

He will come straight. Look you lay home to him.

Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear with...

Ahem. So Polonius speaks with the Queen, to advise her on what to say once Hamlet arrives...





And that your Grace hath screened and stood between much heat and him.



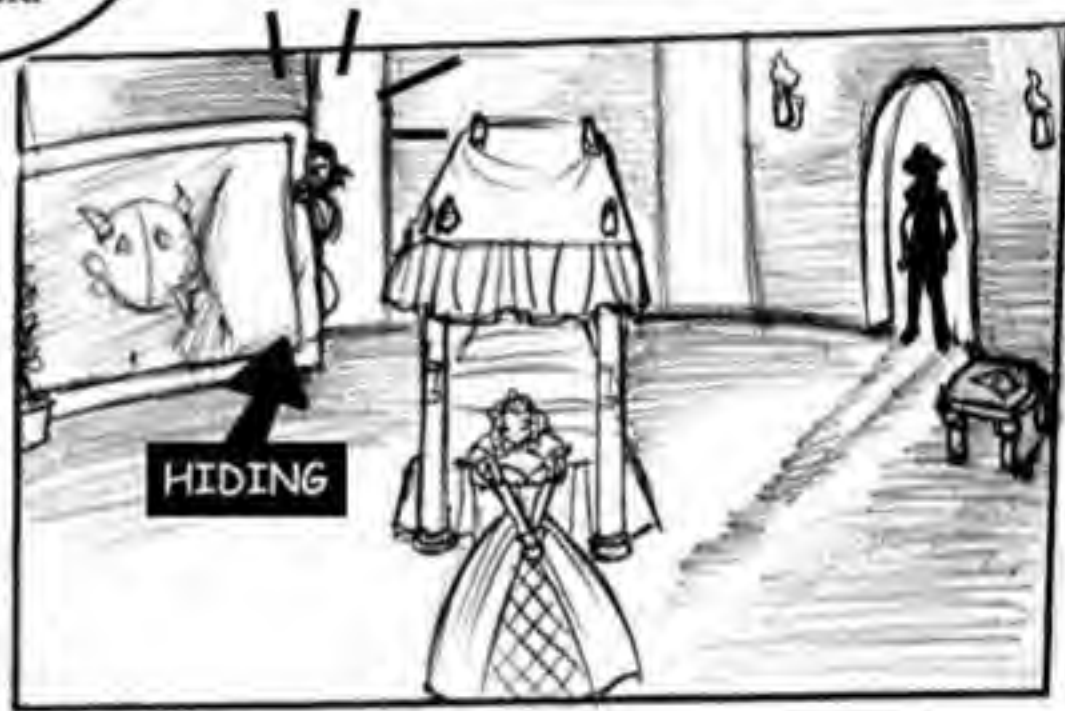
I'll silence me even here.

Pray you, be round with him.



I'll warrant you. Fear me not.

Withdraw, I hear him coming...



HIDING



Now, mother, what's the matter?



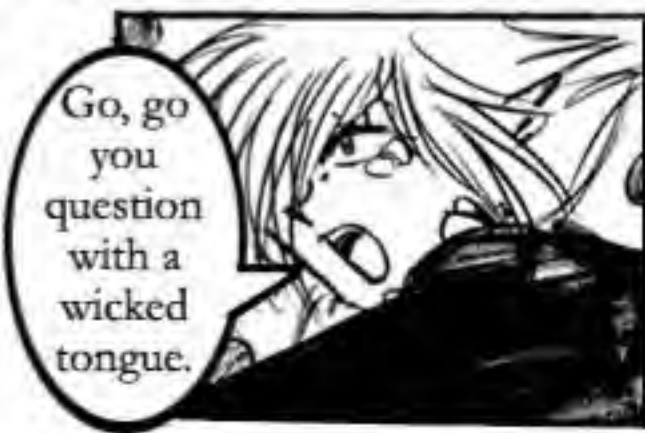
Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.



Mother, you have my father much offended.



Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.



Go, go you question with a wicked tongue.

Why,  
how now,  
Hamlet?



What's the  
matter  
now?

Have you  
forgot  
me?

No,  
by the rood,  
not so.

You are  
the Queen,  
your  
husband's  
brother's  
wife...

...And (would  
it were not so)  
you are my  
mother.

Nay, then  
I'll set those to you  
that can speak.

Come, come,  
and sit you down;  
you shall not budge!

SLAP!

FWUMP!

You go not till  
I set you up a glass..

Where you may see  
the inmost part of you.



What wilt thou do?  
Thou wilt not murder me?

HELP !!

Polonius, seeing the Queen is in trouble, cries out for help...

What ho!  
Help!

...It will prove a fatal error in judgement, for Hamlet mistakes him for King Claudius and--

How now, a rat?

Dead, for a ducat!

THOK!

DEAD !!

Uhhh...



Gyargh !  
Slipping...  
fast...



Gasp... if only I had  
chosen to pursue JUSTICE  
in the pure light of day...

...instead of  
sneaking and  
spying all the  
time...



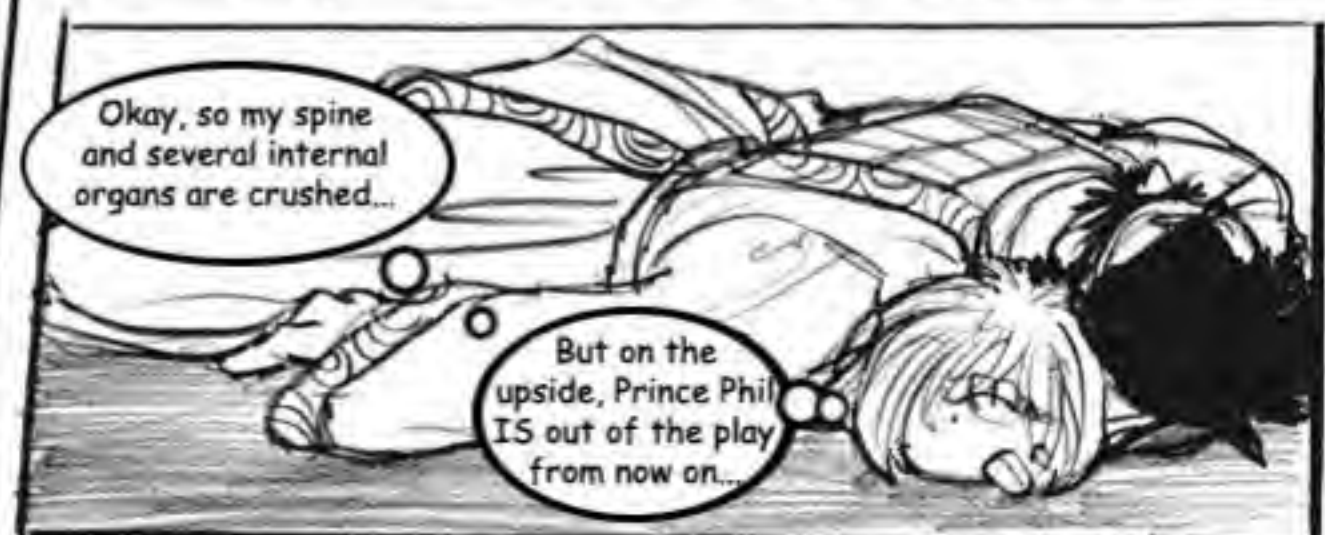
To think that I  
shall never see my  
precious Amel--er--  
*Ophelia* again !



Farewell, my  
darling daughter...  
...Fare...well....



Unh....



Okay, so my spine  
and several internal  
organs are crushed...

But on the  
upside, Prince Phil  
IS out of the play  
from now on...



act  
three



A decorative floral vignette on the left side of the page, featuring a central flower with multiple petals and a stem with leaves.

# Act Two





# Second Intermission